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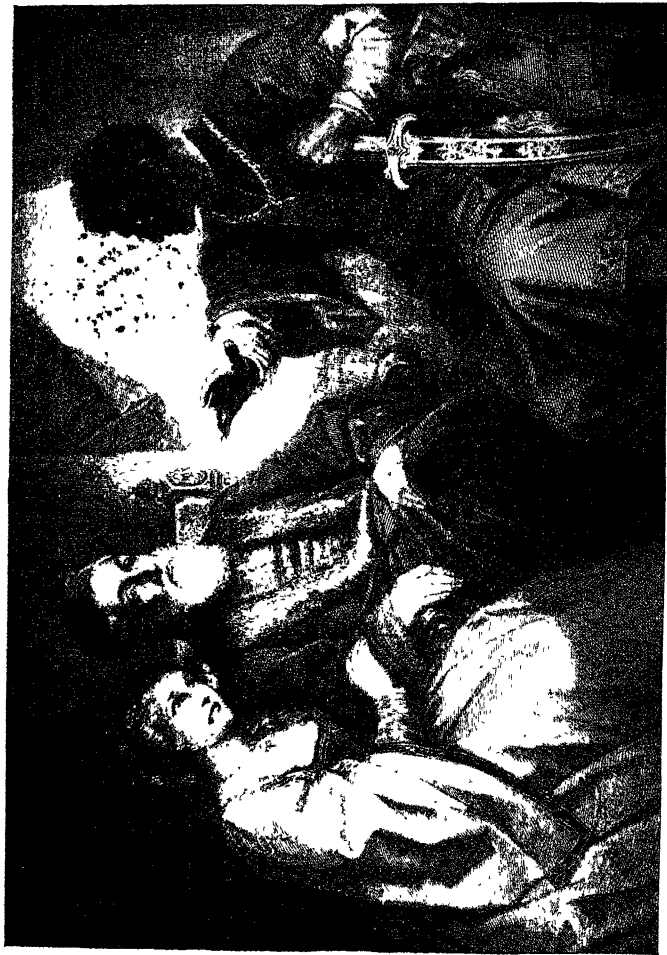
TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE



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TORONTO



Her father loved me ; oft invited me ;
Still question'd me the story of my life.

Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, II. E.L.S.S.

From the engraving by G. Goldberg, after H. Hofmann.

Tales from Shakespeare

By
Charles and Mary Lamb

Selected and Edited by
H. A. Treble, M.A.

SECOND SERIES

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ILLUSTRATION

Othello tells the story of his life to Desdemona
 and her father (p. 101) - - - - - *Frontispiece*
 From the Engraving by G. Goldberg after H. Hofmann.

INTRODUCTION

NEVER did brother and sister love one another more tenderly than Charles and Mary Lamb. There was a great sorrow in their lives which perhaps drew them thus close together. Their family was tainted with insanity. Both brother and sister suffered from this dreadful disease, and in one of her fits of madness Mary killed her mother. Charles snatched the weapon from her hand, and the shock may have been the cause which prevented any recurrence of the malady in his case. But with Mary the attacks were frequent, and Charles nobly devoted his life to the care of his afflicted sister. There is nothing more pathetic than the story told by one of their friends of how he met the brother and sister (who seem to have had forewarnings of coming attacks) walking hand in hand across the fields to the old asylum, both bathed in tears.

Charles wrote many delightful essays, in which he often referred very tenderly to his sister. He never called her his sister, but always wrote of her as his cousin, Bridget Elia. It will be interesting to see what he has to say about Bridget. Here they are at the fireside, playing a game of whist :

“That last game I had with my sweet cousin—(dare I tell thee how foolish I am ?)—I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it were a mere shade of play : I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be for ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which

Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over ; and as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be for ever playing."

Another time Charles speaks of her as his true companion :

"In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit ; but best when she goes a journey with you."

We shall do well to remember the brother and sister had for many, many years lived together, old bachelor and maid, "in a sort of double singleness" : in the days of his weakling infancy Charles had been her tender charge, as he had been her care "in foolish manhood since."

Perhaps, then, we shall not wonder that they wrote a book together ; and when we know that they loved going to plays, and especially Shakespeare's, we need not marvel that their book consisted of tales from the plays written by Shakespeare himself. For they loved Shakespeare, both of them ; loved all the stories of Viola and Rosalind and Miranda and Perdita ; loved all Shakespeare's people. But it was Mary who loved the stories most of all. Her brother knew, as she never did, how great a man Shakespeare was in other ways : sometimes, he said, he thought Shakespeare was almost too great to be loved properly. "Shall I be thought fantastical," he once wrote, "if I confess that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or of Shakespeare ?" Yet he repents just afterwards, when he tells of the books he loves by the fireside : "Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season, the Tempest, or his own Winter's Tale."

Still, it was Mary who loved the Tales. "She must have a story," Charles wrote, "well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents." The people in the plays she loved too, and would never be

happier than when she went with her brother to see their favourite plays on the stage. Charles often wrote afterwards about their visits to the theatre and the famous actors they saw. He tells us how Bridget enjoyed it all. "When the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with *Rosalind in Arden*, or with *Viola at the court of Illyria*?"

So, whenever we read the *Tales*, we can imagine these two, brother and sister, Elia (as he always called himself) and Bridget Elia, sitting by the fire, writing the stories of the dream-people of the plays. Elia would often break off and leave Bridget to get on alone, while he played truant for a time from Shakespeare, and kept company with his other book-friends, Kit Marlowe and old Sir Thomas Browne. At any rate, we can feel that into the room where the brother and sister were sitting there often strayed the ghosts of *Prospero* and *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and old *Shylock* with his knife. Perhaps, afterwards, Elia and Bridget would put the books away and play at cards, just as we, when we have finished reading the tales they have written for us, may close our books and take out our stamp-albums or our crochet-work. But our recreation will be all the happier and better—as theirs was—for the companionship of Shakespeare's men and women. So let us get to the stories without more ado. They will lead us to the gate of Shakespeare's own garden; and there we shall love to walk when we become a little older, for it is full of beauty.

I

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, becoming a widow by the sudden death of King Hamlet, in less than two months after his death married his brother Claudius, which was noted by all people at the time for a strange act of indiscretion, or unfeelingness, or worse ; for this Claudius did no ways resemble her late husband in the qualities of his person or his mind, but was as contemptible in outward appearance as he was base and unworthy in disposition ; and suspicions did not fail to arise in the minds of some that he had privately made 10 away with his brother, the late king, with the view of marrying his widow and ascending the throne of Denmark, to the exclusion of young Hamlet, the son of the buried king, and lawful successor to the throne.

But upon no one did this unadvised action of the queen make such impression as upon this young prince, who loved and venerated the memory of his dead father almost to idolatry ; and being of a nice sense of honour, and a most exquisite practiser of propriety himself, did sorely take to heart this unworthy conduct of his mother 20 Gertrude, insomuch that, between grief for his father's death and shame for his mother's marriage, this young prince was overclouded with a deep melancholy, and

lost all his mirth and all his good looks ; all his customary pleasure in books forsook him ; his princely exercises and sports, proper to his youth, were no longer acceptable ; he grew weary of the world, which seemed to him an unweeded garden, where all the wholesome flowers were choked up, and nothing but weeds could thrive.

Not that the prospect of exclusion from the throne, his lawful inheritance, weighed so much upon his spirits
10 —though that, to a young and high-minded prince, was a bitter wound and a sore indignity ; but what so galled him and took away his cheerful spirits was that his mother had shown herself so forgetful to his father's memory ; and such a father !—who had been to her so loving and so gentle a husband ! And then she always appeared so loving and obedient a wife to him, and would hang upon him as if her affection grew to him ; and now, within two months, or as it seemed to young Hamlet less than two months, she had married again—
20 married his uncle, her dead husband's brother, in itself a highly improper and unlawful marriage, from the nearness of relationship, but made much more so by the indecent haste with which it was concluded, and the unkingly character of the man whom she had chosen to be the partner of her throne and bed. This it was which, more than the loss of ten kingdoms, dashed the spirits and brought a cloud over the mind of this honourable young prince.

In vain was all that his mother Gertrude or the king
30 could do or contrive to divert him ; he still appeared in court in a suit of deep black, as mourning for the king his father's death, which mode of dress he had never laid

aside, not even in compliment to his mother upon the day she was married, nor could he be brought to join in any of the festivities or rejoicings of that, as appeared to him, disgraceful day.

What mostly troubled him was an uncertainty about the manner of his father's death. It was given out by Claudius that a serpent had stung him, but young Hamlet had shrewd suspicions that Claudius himself was the serpent: in plain English, that he had murdered him for his crown, and that the serpent who stung his 10 father did now sit on his throne.

How far he was right in this conjecture, and what he ought to think of his mother—how far she was privy to this murder, and whether by her consent or knowledge, or without, it came to pass—were the doubts which continually harassed and distracted him.

A rumour had reached the ear of young Hamlet that an apparition, exactly resembling the dead king his father, had been seen by the soldiers upon watch, on the platform before the palace at midnight, for two or 20 three nights successively. The figure came constantly clad in the same suit of armour, from head to foot, which the dead king was known to have worn; and they who saw it—Hamlet's bosom friend Horatio was one—agreed in their testimony as to the time and manner of its appearance: that it came just as the clock struck twelve; that it looked pale, with a face more of sorrow than of anger; that its beard was grisly, and the colour a *sable silvered*, as they had seen it in his lifetime; that it made no answer when they spoke to it, yet once they 30 thought it lifted up its head and addressed itself to motion as if it were about to speak, but in that moment

the morning cock crew, and it shrank in haste away and vanished out of their sight.

The young prince, strangely amazed at their relation, which was too consistent and agreeing with itself, to disbelieve, concluded that it was his father's ghost which they had seen, and determined to take his watch with the soldiers that night that he might have a chance of seeing it, for he reasoned with himself that such an appearance did not come for nothing, but that the ghost
10 had something to impart, and though it had been silent hitherto, yet it would speak to him; and he waited with impatience for the coming of the night.

When night came, he took his stand with Horatio, and Marcellus, one of the guard, upon the platform, where this apparition was accustomed to walk; and it being a cold night, and the air unusually raw and nipping, Hamlet and Horatio and their companion fell into some talk about the coldness of the night, which was suddenly broken off by Horatio announcing that the ghost was
20 coming.

At the sight of his father's spirit, Hamlet was struck with a sudden surprise and fear. He at first called upon the angels and heavenly ministers to defend them, for he knew not whether it were a good spirit or bad, whether it came for good or for evil; but he gradually assumed more courage, and his father—as it seemed to him—looked upon him so piteously, and as it were desiring to have conversation with him, and did in all respects appear so like himself as he was when he lived, that
30 Hamlet could not help addressing him. He called him by his name, "Hamlet, King, Father!" and conjured him that he would tell the reason why he had left his

grave, where they had seen him quietly bestowed, to come again and visit the earth and the moonlight, and besought him that he would let them know if there was anything which they could do to give peace to his spirit. And the ghost beckoned to Hamlet that he should go with him to some more removed place, where they might be alone; and Horatio and Marcellus would have dissuaded the young prince from following it, for they feared lest it should be some evil spirit, who would tempt him to the neighbouring sea, or to the top of some dreadful cliff, 10 and there put on some horrible shape which might deprive the prince of his reason. But their counsels and entreaties could not alter Hamlet's determination, who cared too little about life to fear the losing of it; and as to his soul, he said, what could the spirit do to that, being a thing immortal as itself? And he felt as hardy as a lion, and bursting from them, who did all they could to hold him, he followed whithersoever the spirit led him.

And when they were alone together, the spirit broke 20 silence, and told him that he was the ghost of Hamlet, his father, who had been cruelly murdered, and he told the manner of it: that it was done by his own brother Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, as Hamlet had already but too much suspected, for the hope of succeeding to his bed and crown. That as he was sleeping in his garden—his custom always in the afternoon—this treasonous brother stole upon him in his sleep, and poured the juice of poisonous henbane into his ears, which has such antipathy to the life of man, that swift as quicksilver it 30 courses through all the veins of the body, baking up the blood, and spreading a crust-like leprosy all over the

skin. Thus, sleeping, by a brother's hand he was cut off at once from his crown, his queen, and his life; and he adjured Hamlet, if he did ever his dear father love, that he would revenge his foul murder. And the ghost lamented to his son that his mother should so fall off from virtue as to prove false to the wedded love of her first husband and to marry his murderer; but he cautioned Hamlet, howsoever he proceeded in his revenge against his wicked uncle, by no means to act any violence
10 against the person of his mother, but to leave her to Heaven, and to the stings and thorns of conscience. And Hamlet promised to observe the ghost's direction in all things, and the ghost vanished.

And when Hamlet was left alone, he took up a solemn resolution, that all he had in his memory, all that he had ever learned by books or observation, should be instantly forgotten by him, and nothing live in his brain but the memory of what the ghost had told him, and had enjoined him to do. And Hamlet related the particulars of the
20 conversation which had passed to none but his dear friend Horatio; and he enjoined both to him and Marcellus the strictest secrecy as to what they had seen that night.

The terror which the sight of the ghost had left upon the senses of Hamlet, he being weak and dispirited before, almost unhinged his mind, and drove him beside his reason. And he, fearing that it would continue to have this effect, which might subject him to observation, and set his uncle upon his guard, if he suspected that he was
30 meditating anything against him, or that Hamlet really knew more of his father's death than he professed, took up a strange resolution, from that time to counterfeit

as if he were really and truly mad ; thinking that he would be less an object of suspicion when his uncle should believe him incapable of any serious project, and that his real perturbation of mind would be best covered and pass concealed under a disguise of pretended lunacy.

From this time Hamlet affected a certain wildness and strangeness in his apparel, his speech, and behaviour, and did so excellently counterfeit the madman that the king and queen were both deceived, and not thinking his grief for his father's death a sufficient cause to 10 produce such a distemper—for they knew not of the appearance of the ghost—they concluded that his malady was love, and they thought they had found out the object.

Before Hamlet fell into the melancholy way which has been related, he had dearly loved a fair maid called Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, the king's chief counsellor in affairs of state. He had sent her letters and rings, and made many tenders of his affection to her, and importuned her with love in honourable fashion ; 20 and she had given belief to his vows and importunities. But the melancholy into which he fell latterly had made him neglect her, and from the time he conceived the project of counterfeiting madness, he affected to treat her with unkindness and a sort of rudeness ; but she, good lady, rather than reproach him with being false to her, persuaded herself that it was nothing but the disease in his mind, and no settled unkindness, which had made him less observant of her than formerly ; and she compared the faculties of his once noble mind and excellent 30 understanding, impaired as they were with the deep melancholy that oppressed him, to sweet bells which in

themselves are capable of most exquisite music, but when jangled out of tune, or rudely handled, produce only a harsh and unpleasing sound.

Though the rough business which Hamlet had in hand—the revenging of his father's death upon his murderer—did not suit with the playful state of courtship, or admit of the society of so idle a passion as love now seemed to him, yet it could not hinder but that soft thoughts of his Ophelia would come between; and in
10 one of these moments, when he thought that his treatment of this gentle lady had been unreasonably harsh, he wrote her a letter full of wild starts of passion, and in extravagant terms, such as agreed with his supposed madness, but mixed with some gentle touches of affection, which could not but show to this honoured lady that a deep love for her yet lay at the bottom of his heart. He bade her to doubt the stars were fire, and to doubt that the sun did move, to doubt truth to be a liar, but never to doubt that he loved; with more of such extravagant
20 phrases. This letter Ophelia dutifully showed to her father, and the old man thought himself bound to communicate it to the king and queen, who from that time supposed that the true cause of Hamlet's madness was love. And the queen wished that the good beauties of Ophelia might be the happy cause of his wildness, for so she hoped that her virtues might happily restore him to his accustomed way again, to both their honours.

But Hamlet's malady lay deeper than she supposed, or than could be so cured. His father's ghost, which he
30 had seen, still haunted his imagination, and the sacred injunction to revenge his murder gave him no rest till it was accomplished. Every hour of delay seemed to

him a sin, and a violation of his father's commands. Yet how to compass the death of the king, surrounded as he constantly was with his guards, was no easy matter. Or if it had been, the presence of the queen, Hamlet's mother, who was generally with the king, was a restraint upon his purpose, which he could not break through. Besides, the very circumstance that the usurper was his mother's husband filled him with some remorse, and still blunted the edge of his purpose. The mere act of putting a fellow-creature to death was in itself odious 10 and terrible to a disposition naturally so gentle as Hamlet's was. His very melancholy, and the dejection of spirits he had so long been in, produced an irresoluteness and wavering of purpose, which kept him from proceeding to extremities. Moreover, he could not help having some scruples upon his mind whether the spirit which he had seen was indeed his father, or whether it might not be the devil, who, he had heard, has power to take any form he pleases, and who might have assumed his father's shape only to take advantage of 20 his weakness and his melancholy, to drive him to the doing of so desperate an act as murder. And he determined that he would have more certain grounds to go upon than a vision, or apparition, which might be a delusion.

While he was in this irresolute mind, there came to the court certain players in whom Hamlet formerly used to take delight, and particularly to hear one of them speak a tragical speech, describing the death of old Priam, King of Troy, with the grief of Hecuba, his 30 queen. Hamlet welcomed his old friends the players, and remembering how that speech had formerly given

him pleasure, requested the player to repeat it, which he did in so lively a manner, setting forth the cruel murder of the feeble old king, with the destruction of his people and city by fire, and the mad grief of the old queen, running barefoot up and down the palace, with a poor clout upon that head where a crown had been, and with nothing but a blanket upon her loins, snatched up in haste, where she had worn a royal robe ; that not only it drew tears from all that stood by, who
10 thought they saw the real scene, so lively was it represented, but even the player himself delivered it with a broken voice and real tears.

This put Hamlet upon thinking, if that player could so work himself up to passion by mere fictitious speech, to weep for one that he had never seen—for Hecuba, that had been dead so many hundred years—how dull was he, who having a real motive and cue for passion, a real king and a dear father murdered, was yet so little moved, that his revenge all this while had seemed to have slept
20 in dull and muddy forgetfulness ! And while he meditated on actors and acting, and the powerful effects which a good play, represented to the life, has upon the spectator, he remembered the instance of some murderer, who, seeing a murder on the stage, was by the mere force of the scene and resemblance of circumstances so affected, that on the spot he confessed the crime which he had committed. And he determined that these players should play something like the murder of his father before his uncle, and he would watch narrowly what
30 effect it might have upon him, and from his looks he would be able to gather with more certainty if he were the murderer or not. To this effect he ordered a play

to be prepared, to the representation of which he invited the king and queen.

The story of the play was of a murder done in Vienna upon a duke. The duke's name was Gonzago, his wife Baptista. The play showed how one Lucianus, a near relation to the duke, poisoned him in his garden for his estate, and how the murderer in a short time after got the love of Gonzago's wife.

At the representation of this play, the king, who did not know the trap which was laid for him, was present, 10 with his queen and the whole court, Hamlet sitting attentively near him to observe his looks. The play began with a conversation between Gonzago and his wife, in which the lady made many protestations of love, and of never marrying a second husband if she should outlive Gonzago; wishing she might be accursed if she ever took a second husband, and adding that no woman ever did so but those wicked women who kill their first husbands. Hamlet observed the king, his uncle, change colour at this expression, and that it was as bad as 20 wormwood both to him and to the queen. But when Lucianus, according to the story, came to poison Gonzago sleeping in the garden, the strong resemblance which it bore to his own wicked act upon the late king, his brother, whom he had poisoned in his garden, so struck upon the conscience of this usurper, that he was unable to sit out the rest of the play, but on a sudden calling for lights to his chamber, and affecting or partly feeling a sudden sickness, he abruptly left the theatre. The king being departed, the play was given over. Now 30 Hamlet had seen enough to be satisfied that the words of the ghost were true, and no illusion; and, in a fit of

gaiety, like that which comes over a man who suddenly has some great doubt or scruple resolved, he swore to Horatio that he would take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds. But before he could make up his resolution as to what measures of revenge he should take, now he was certainly informed that his uncle was his father's murderer, he was sent for by the queen, his mother, to a private conference in her closet.

It was by desire of the king that the queen sent for
10 Hamlet, that she might signify to her son how much his late behaviour had displeased them both ; and the king, wishing to know all that passed at that conference, and thinking that the too partial report of a mother might let slip some part of Hamlet's words, which it might much import the king to know, Polonius, the old counsellor of state, was ordered to plant himself behind the hangings in the queen's closet, where he might unseen hear all that passed. This artifice was particularly adapted to the disposition of Polonius, who was a man grown old in
20 crooked maxims and policies of state, and delighted to get at the knowledge of matters in an indirect and cunning way.

Hamlet being come to his mother, she began to tax him in the roundest way with his actions and behaviour, and she told him that he had given great offence to *his father*, meaning the king, his uncle, whom, because he had married her, she called Hamlet's father. Hamlet, sorely indignant that she should give so dear and honoured a name as father seemed to him to a wretch
30 who was indeed no better than the murderer of his true father, with some sharpness replied, "Mother, *you* have much offended *my father*." The queen said that was

but an idle answer. "As good as the question deserved," said Hamlet. The queen asked him if he had forgotten who it was he was speaking to. "Alas!" replied Hamlet, "I wish I could forget. You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife, and you are my mother. I wish you were not what you are."—"Nay, then," said the queen, "if you show me so little respect, I will set those to you that can speak," and was going to send the king or Polonius to him.

But Hamlet would not let her go, now he had her 10 alone, till he had tried if his words could not bring her to some sense of her wicked life; and taking her by the wrist, he held her fast, and made her sit down. She, affrighted at his earnest manner, and fearful lest in his lunacy he should do her some mischief, cried out; and a voice was heard from behind the hangings, "Help, help the queen!" which Hamlet hearing, and verily thinking that it was the king himself there concealed, he drew his sword, and stabbed at the place where the voice came from, as he would have stabbed at a rat that 20 ran there, till the voice ceasing, he concluded the person to be dead. But when he dragged forth the body, it was not the king, but Polonius, the old officious counsellor, that had planted himself as a spy behind the hangings. "O me!" exclaimed the queen, "what a rash and bloody deed you have done!"—"A bloody deed, mother," replied Hamlet, "but not so bad as yours, who killed a king, and married his brother."

Hamlet had gone too far to leave off here. He was now in the humour to speak plainly to his mother, and 30 he pursued it. And though the faults of parents are tenderly to be treated by their children, yet in the case

of great crimes the son may have leave to speak even to his own mother with some harshness, so as that harshness is meant for her good, and to turn her from her wicked ways, and not done for the purpose of upbraiding. And now this virtuous prince did in moving terms represent to the queen the heinousness of her offence, in being so forgetful of the dead king, his father, as in so short a space of time to marry with his brother and reputed murderer ; such an act as, after the vows which she had
10 sworn to her first husband, was enough to make all vows of woman suspected, and all virtue to be counted hypocrisy, wedding contracts to be less than gamesters' oaths, and religion to be a mockery and a mere form of words. He said she had done such a deed that the heavens blushed at it, and the earth was sick of her because of it. And he showed her two pictures, the one of the late king, her first husband, and the other of the present king, her second husband, and he bade her mark the difference : what a grace was on the brow of his
20 father, how like a god he looked ! the curls of Apollo, the forehead of Jupiter, the eye of Mars, and a posture like to Mercury newly alighted upon some heaven-kissing hill ! this man, he said, *had been* her husband. And then he showed her whom she had got in his stead : how like a blight or a mildew he looked, for so he had blasted his wholesome brother. And the queen was sore ashamed that he should so turn her eyes inward upon her soul, which she now saw so black and deformed. And he asked her how she could continue to live with
30 this man and be a wife to him who had murdered her first husband, and got the crown by as false means as a thief—— And just as he spoke, the ghost of his father,

such as he was in his lifetime, and such as he had lately seen it, entered the room, and Hamlet, in great terror, asked what it would have : and the ghost said that it came to remind him of the revenge he had promised, which Hamlet seemed to have forgot ; and the ghost bade him speak to his mother, for the grief and terror she was in would else kill her. It then vanished, and was seen by none but Hamlet, neither could he, by pointing to where it stood, or by any description, make his mother perceive it ; who was terribly frightened all this while to hear him conversing, as it seemed to her, with nothing ; and she imputed it to the disorder of his mind. But Hamlet begged her not to flatter her wicked soul in such a manner as to think it was his madness, and not her own offences, which had brought his father's spirit again on the earth. And he bade her feel his pulse, how temperately it beat, not like a madman's. And he begged of her with tears to confess herself to Heaven for what was past, and for the future to avoid the company of the king, and be no more as a wife to him ; and when she should show herself a mother to him, by respecting his father's memory, he would ask a blessing of her as a son. And she promising to observe his directions, the conference ended. 20

And now Hamlet was at leisure to consider who it was that in his unfortunate rashness he had killed ; and when he came to see that it was Polonius, the father of the Lady Ophelia, whom he so dearly loved, he drew apart the dead body, and, his spirits being now a little quieter, he wept for what he had done. 30

This unfortunate death of Polonius gave the king a pretext for sending Hamlet out of the kingdom. He

would willingly have put him to death, fearing him as dangerous ; but he dreaded the people, who loved Hamlet, and the queen, who, with all her faults, doted on the prince her son. So this subtle king, under pretence of providing for Hamlet's safety, that he might not be called to account for Polonius' death, caused him to be conveyed on board a ship bound for England, under the care of two courtiers, by whom he despatched letters to the English court, which at that time was in subjection
10 and paid tribute to Denmark, requiring for special reasons there pretended that Hamlet should be put to death as soon as he landed on English ground. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, in the night-time secretly got at the letters, and skilfully erasing his own name, he in the stead of it put in the names of those two courtiers who had the charge of him, to be put to death ; then sealing up the letters, he put them into their place again. Soon after the ship was attacked by pirates, and a sea-fight commenced, in the course of which Hamlet, desirous
20 to show his valour, with sword in hand singly boarded the enemy's vessel, while his own ship in a cowardly manner bore away ; and, leaving him to his fate, the two courtiers made the best of their way to England, charged with those letters the sense of which Hamlet had altered to their own deserved destruction.

The pirates, who had the prince in their power, showed themselves gentle enemies ; and, knowing whom they had got prisoner, in the hope that the prince might do them a good turn at court in recompense for any favour
30 they might show him, they set Hamlet on shore at the nearest port in Denmark. From that place Hamlet wrote to the king, acquainting him with the strange

chance which had brought him back to his own country, and saying that on the next day he should present himself before his majesty. When he got home, a sad spectacle offered itself the first thing to his eyes.

This was the funeral of the young and beautiful Ophelia, his once dear mistress. The wits of this young lady had begun to turn ever since her poor father's death. That he should die a violent death, and by the hands of the prince whom she loved, so affected this tender young maid, that in a little time she grew perfectly distracted, 10 and would go about giving flowers away to the ladies of the court, and saying that they were for her father's burial, singing songs about love and about death, and sometimes such as had no meaning at all, as if she had no memory of what happened to her. There was a willow which grew slanting over a brook, and reflected its leaves in the stream. To this brook she came one day when she was unwatched, with garlands she had been making, mixed up of daisies and nettles, flowers and weeds together, and clambering up to hang her 20 garland upon the boughs of the willow, a bough broke and precipitated this fair young maid, garland and all that she had gathered, into the water, where her clothes bore her up for a while, during which she chanted scraps of old tunes, like one insensible to her own distress, or as if she were a creature natural to that element; but long it was not before her garments, heavy with the wet, pulled her in from her melodious singing to a muddy and miserable death. It was the funeral of this fair maid which her brother Laertes was celebrating, the king and 30 queen and whole court being present, when Hamlet arrived.

He knew not what all this show imported, but stood on one side, not inclining to interrupt the ceremony. He saw the flowers strewed upon her grave, as the custom was in maiden burials, which the queen herself threw in ; and as she threw them, she said, "Sweets to the sweet ! I thought to have decked thy bridal bed, sweet maid, not to have strewed thy grave. Thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife." And he heard her brother wish that violets might spring from her
10 grave ; and he saw him leap into the grave all frantic with grief, and bid the attendants pile mountains of earth upon him, that he might be buried with her. And Hamlet's love for this fair maid came back to him, and he could not bear that a brother should show so much transport of grief, for he thought that he loved Ophelia better than forty thousand brothers. Then discovering himself, he leaped into the grave where Laertes was, all as frantic or more frantic than he ; and Laertes knowing him to be Hamlet, who had been the cause of his father's
20 and his sister's death, grappled him by the throat as an enemy till the attendants parted them. And Hamlet, after the funeral, excused his hasty act in throwing himself into the grave as if to brave Laertes ; but he said that he could not bear that any one should seem to outgo him in grief for the death of the fair Ophelia. And for the time these two noble youths seemed reconciled.

But out of the grief and anger of Laertes for the death of his father and Ophelia, the king, Hamlet's wicked
30 uncle, contrived destruction for Hamlet. He set on Laertes, under cover of peace and reconciliation, to challenge Hamlet to a friendly trial of skill at fencing,

which Hamlet accepting, a day was appointed to try the match. At this match all the court was present ; and Laertes, by direction of the king, prepared a poisoned weapon. Upon this match great wagers were laid by the courtiers, as both Hamlet and Laertes were known to excel at this sword-play ; and Hamlet taking up the foils chose one, not at all suspecting the treachery of Laertes, or being careful to examine Laertes' weapon, who, instead of a foil or blunted sword which the laws of fencing require, made use of one with a point, and 10 poisoned. At first Laertes did but play with Hamlet, and suffered him to gain some advantages, which the dissembling king magnified and extolled beyond measure, drinking to Hamlet's success, and wagering rich bets upon the issue ; but after a few passes, Laertes, growing warm, made a deadly thrust at Hamlet with his poisoned weapon, and gave him a mortal blow. Hamlet incensed, but not knowing the whole of the treachery, in the scuffle exchanged his own innocent weapon for Laertes' deadly one, and with a thrust of Laertes' own sword repaid 20 Laertes home, who was thus justly caught in his own treachery. In this instant the queen shrieked out that she was poisoned. She had inadvertently drunk out of a bowl which the king had prepared for Hamlet, in case that being warm in fencing he should call for drink : into this the treacherous king had infused a deadly poison to make sure of Hamlet, if Laertes had failed. He had forgotten to warn the queen of the bowl, which she drank of, and immediately died, exclaiming with her last breath that she was poisoned. 30

Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, ordered the doors to be shut while he sought it out. Laertes told him to

seek no farther, for he was the traitor ; and, feeling his life go away with the wound which Hamlet had given him, he made confession of the treachery he had used, and how he had fallen a victim to it. And he told Hamlet of the envenomed point, and said that Hamlet had not half an hour to live, for no medicine could cure him ; and begging forgiveness of Hamlet, he died, with his last words accusing the king of being the contriver of the mischief. When Hamlet saw his end draw near, 10 there being yet some venom left upon the sword, he suddenly turned upon his false uncle, and thrust the point of it to his heart, fulfilling the promise which he had made to his father's spirit, whose injunction was now accomplished, and his foul murder revenged upon the murderer. Then Hamlet, feeling his breath fail and life departing, turned to his dear friend Horatio, who had been spectator of this fatal tragedy, and with his dying breath requested him that he would live to tell his story to the world—for Horatio had made a motion 20 as if he would slay himself, to accompany the prince in death ; and Horatio promised that he would make a true report, as one that was privy to all the circumstances. And, thus satisfied, the noble heart of Hamlet cracked ; and Horatio and the bystanders with many tears commended the spirit of their sweet prince to the guardianship of angels ; for Hamlet was a loving and a gentle prince, and greatly beloved for his many noble and prince-like qualities, and if he had lived would no doubt have proved a most royal and complete king to Denmark.

II

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

THERE was a law in the city of Athens which gave to its citizens the power of compelling their daughters to marry whomsoever they pleased ; for upon a daughter's refusing to marry the man her father had chosen to be her husband, the father was empowered by this law to cause her to be put to death ; but as fathers do not often desire the death of their own daughters, even though they do happen to prove a little refractory, this law was seldom or never put in execution, though perhaps the young ladies of that city were not unfrequently 10 threatened by their parents with the terrors of it.

There was one instance, however, of an old man, whose name was Egeus, who actually did come before Theseus (at that time the reigning Duke of Athens) to complain that his daughter Hermia, whom he had commanded to marry Demetrius, a young man of a noble Athenian family, refused to obey him, because she loved another young Athenian, named Lysander. Egeus demanded justice of Theseus, and desired that this cruel law might be put in force against his daughter. 20

Hermia pleaded in excuse for her disobedience, that Demetrius had formerly professed love for her dear friend Helena, and that Helena loved Demetrius to

distraction ; but this honourable reason which Hermia gave for not obeying her father's command moved not the stern Egeus.

Theseus, though a great and merciful prince, had no power to alter the laws of his country ; therefore he could only give Hermia four days to consider of it, and at the end of that time, if she still refused to marry Demetrius, she was to be put to death.

When Hermia was dismissed from the presence of the
10 duke, she went to her lover, Lysander, and told him the peril she was in, and that she must either give him up and marry Demetrius, or lose her life in four days.

Lysander was in great affliction at hearing these evil tidings ; but recollecting that he had an aunt who lived at some distance from Athens, and that at the place where she lived the cruel law could not be put in force against Hermia (this law not extending beyond the boundaries of the city), he proposed to Hermia that she should steal out of her father's house that night, and go
20 with him to his aunt's house, where he would marry her. " I will meet you," said Lysander, " in the wood a few miles without the city ; in that delightful wood where we have so often walked with Helena in the pleasant month of May."

To this proposal Hermia joyfully agreed ; and she told no one of her intended flight but her friend Helena. Helena (as maidens will do foolish things for love) very ungenerously resolved to go and tell this to Demetrius, though she could hope no benefit from betraying her
30 friend's secret but the poor pleasure of following her faithless lover to the wood ; for she well knew that Demetrius would go thither in pursuit of Hermia.

The wood in which Lysander and Hermia proposed to meet was the favourite haunt of those little beings known by the name of *Fairies*.

Oberon the king, and Titania the queen of the fairies, with all their tiny train of followers, in this wood held their midnight revels.

Between this little king and queen of sprites there happened, at this time, a sad disagreement: they never met by moonlight in the shady walks of this pleasant wood but they were quarrelling, till all their fairy elves 10 would creep into acorn-cups and hide themselves for fear.

The cause of this unhappy disagreement was Titania's refusing to give Oberon a little changeling boy, whose mother had been Titania's friend; and upon her death the fairy queen stole the child from its nurse, and brought him up in the woods.

The night on which the lovers were to meet in this wood, as Titania was walking with some of her maids of honour, she met Oberon attended by his train of fairy 20 courtiers.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania," said the fairy king. The queen replied, "What! jealous Oberon, is it you? Fairies, skip hence; I have forsworn his company!"—"Tarry, rash fairy!" said Oberon: "am not I thy lord? Why does Titania cross her Oberon? Give me your little changeling boy to be my page."

"Set your heart at rest," answered the queen; "your whole fairy kingdom buys not the boy of me." She then left her lord in great anger. "Well, go your way," 30 said Oberon: "before the morning dawns I will torment you for this injury."

Oberon then sent for Puck, his chief favourite and privy counsellor.

Puck (or, as he was sometimes called, Robin Good-fellow) was a shrewd and knavish sprite, that used to play comical pranks in the neighbouring villages—sometimes getting into the dairies and skimming the milk, sometimes plunging his light and airy form into the butter-churn, and while he was dancing his fantastic shape in the churn, in vain the dairymaid would labour
10 to change her cream into butter: nor had the village swains any better success; whenever Puck chose to play his freaks in the brewing copper, the ale was sure to be spoiled. When a few good neighbours were met to drink some comfortable ale together, Puck would jump into the bowl of ale in the likeness of a roasted crab, and when some old goody was going to drink he would bob against her lips, and spill the ale over her withered chin; and presently after, when the same old dame was gravely seating herself to tell her neighbours a sad and melancholy
20 story, Puck would slip her three-legged stool from under her, and down toppled the poor old woman, and then the old gossips would hold their sides and laugh at her, and swear they never wasted a merrier hour.

“Come hither, Puck,” said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night. “Fetch me the flower which maids call ‘Love in Idleness’; the juice of that little purple flower laid on the eyelids of those who sleep will make them, when they awake, dote on the first thing they see. Some of the juice of that flower I will drop
30 on the eyelids of my Titania when she is asleep, and the first thing she looks upon when she opens her eyes she will fall in love with, even though it be a lion or a bear,

a meddling monkey or a busy ape ; and before I will take this charm from off her sight, which I can do with another charm I know of, I will make her give me that boy to be my page."

Puck, who loved mischief to his heart, was highly diverted with this intended frolic of his master, and ran to seek the flower ; and while Oberon was waiting the return of Puck, he observed Demetrius and Helena enter the wood : he overheard Demetrius reproaching Helena for following him, and after many unkind words on his 10 part, and gentle expostulations from Helena, reminding him of his former love and professions of true faith to her, he left her (as he said) to the mercy of the wild beasts, and she ran after him as swiftly as she could.

The fairy king, who was always friendly to true lovers, felt great compassion for Helena, and perhaps, as Lysander said they used to walk by moonlight in this pleasant wood, Oberon might have seen Helena in those happy times when she was beloved by Demetrius. However that might be, when Puck returned with the little 20 purple flower, Oberon said to his favourite, " Take a part of this flower : there has been a sweet Athenian lady here who is in love with a disdainful youth ; if you find him sleeping, drop some of the love-juice in his eyes, but contrive to do it when she is near him, that the first thing he sees when he awakes may be this despised lady. You will know the man by the Athenian garments which he wears." Puck promised to manage this matter very dexterously, and then Oberon went, unperceived by Titania, to her bower, where she was preparing to go to 30 rest. Her fairy bower was a bank, where grew wild thyme, cowslips, and sweet violets under a canopy of

woodbine, musk-roses, and eglantine. There Titania always slept some part of the night ; her coverlet, the enamelled skin of a snake, which, though a small mantle, was wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

He found Titania giving orders to her fairies how they were to employ themselves while she slept. "Some of you," said her Majesty, "must kill cankers in the musk-rose buds, and some wage war with the bats for their leathern wings to make my small elves coats, and some 10 of you keep watch that the clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, come not near me ; but first sing me to sleep." Then they began to sing this song :—

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.
Philomel, with melody,
Sing in your sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby :
20 Never harm,
 Nor spell, nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh ;
 So good night with lullaby.

When the fairies had sung their queen asleep with this pretty lullaby, they left her, to perform the important services she had enjoined them. Oberon then softly drew near his Titania, and dropped some of the love-juice on her eyelids, saying :—

What thou seest when thou dost wake,
30 Do it for thy true-love take.

But to return to Hermia, who made her escape out of her father's house that night to avoid the death she was doomed to for refusing to marry Demetrius. When she

entered the wood, she found her dear Lysander waiting for her, to conduct her to his aunt's house ; but before they had passed half through the wood, Hermia was so much fatigued that Lysander, who was very careful of this dear lady, who had proved her affection for him even by hazarding her life for his sake, persuaded her to rest till morning on a bank of soft moss, and lying down himself on the ground at some little distance, they soon fell fast asleep. Here they were found by Puck, who, seeing a handsome young man asleep, and perceiving that his 10 clothes were made in the Athenian fashion, and that a pretty lady was sleeping near him, concluded that this must be the Athenian maid and her disdainful lover whom Oberon had sent him to seek ; and he naturally enough conjectured that, as they were alone together, she must be the first thing he would see when he awoke ; so without more ado he proceeded to pour some of the juice of the little purple flower into his eyes. But it so fell out that Helena came that way, and, instead of Hermia, was the first object Lysander beheld when he 20 opened his eyes ; and, strange to relate, so powerful was the love-charm that all his love for Hermia vanished away, and Lysander fell in love with Helena.

Had he first seen Hermia when he awoke, the blunder Puck committed would have been of no consequence, for he could not love that faithful lady too well ; but for poor Lysander to be forced by a fairy love-charm to forget his own true Hermia, and to run after another lady and leave Hermia asleep quite alone in a wood at midnight, was a sad chance indeed. 30

Thus this misfortune happened. Helena, as has been before related, endeavoured to keep pace with Demetrius

when he ran away so rudely from her ; but she could not continue this unequal race long, men being always better runners in a long race than ladies. Helena soon lost sight of Demetrius, and as she was wandering about, dejected and forlorn, she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping. " Ah ! " said she, " this is Lysander lying on the ground : is he dead or asleep ? " Then, gently touching him, she said, " Good sir, if you are alive, awake." Upon this Lysander opened his
10 eyes, and (the love-charm beginning to work) immediately addressed her in terms of extravagant love and admiration, telling her she as much excelled Hermia in beauty as a dove does a raven, and that he would run through fire for her sweet sake, and many more such lover-like speeches. Helena, knowing Lysander was her friend Hermia's lover, and that he was solemnly engaged to marry her, was in the utmost rage when she heard herself addressed in this manner, for she thought (as well she might) that Lysander was making a jest of her. " Oh ! "
20 said she, " why was I born to be mocked and scorned by every one ? Is it not enough, young man, that I can never get a sweet look or a kind word from Demetrius, but you, sir, must pretend in this disdainful manner to court me ? I thought, Lysander, you were a lord of more true gentleness." Saying these words in great anger, she ran away ; and Lysander followed her, quite forgetful of his own Hermia, who was still asleep.

When Hermia awoke, she was in a sad fright at finding herself alone. She wandered about the wood, not
30 knowing what was become of Lysander, or which way to go to seek for him. In the meantime Demetrius, not being able to find Hermia and his rival Lysander, and

fatigued with his fruitless search, was observed by Oberon fast asleep. Oberon had learnt, by some questions he had asked of Puck, that he had applied the love-charm to the wrong person's eyes, and now, having found the person first intended, he touched the eyelids of the sleeping Demetrius with the love juice, and he instantly awoke; and the first thing he saw being Helena, he, as Lysander had done before, began to address love speeches to her; and just at that moment Lysander, followed by Hermia (for through Puck's 10 unlucky mistake it was now become Hermia's turn to run after her lover), made his appearance; and then Lysander and Demetrius, both speaking together, made love to Helena, they being each one under the influence of the same potent charm.

The astonished Helena thought that Demetrius, Lysander, and her once dear friend Hermia were all in a plot together to make a jest of her.

Hermia was as much surprised as Helena: she knew not why Lysander and Demetrius, who both before loved 20 her, were now become the lovers of Helena; and to Hermia the matter seemed to be no jest.

The ladies, who before had always been the dearest of friends, now fell to high words together.

"Unkind Hermia," said Helena, "it is you have set Lysander on to vex me with mock praises; and your other lover Demetrius, who used almost to spurn me with his foot, have you not bid him call me goddess, nymph, rare, precious, and celestial? He would not speak thus to me, whom he hates, if you did not set him 30 on to make a jest of me. Unkind Hermia to join with men in scorning your poor friend. Have you forgot our

school-day friendship ? How often, Hermia, have we two, sitting on one cushion, both singing one song, with our needles working the same flower, both on the same sampler wrought ; growing up together in fashion of a double cherry, scarcely seeming parted ? Hermia, it is not friendly in you, it is not maidenly, to join with men in scorning your poor friend."

"I am amazed at your passionate words," said Hermia : "I scorn you not ; it seems you scorn me."—
10 "Ay, do !" returned Helena, "persevere, counterfeit serious looks, and make mouths at me when I turn my back ; then wink at each other, and hold the sweet jest up. If you had any pity, grace, or manners, you would not use me thus."

While Helena and Hermia were speaking these angry words to each other, Demetrius and Lysander left them, to fight together in the wood for the love of Helena.

When they found the gentlemen had left them, they departed, and once more wandered weary in the wood
20 in search of their lovers.

As soon as they were gone, the fairy king, who with little Puck had been listening to their quarrels, said to him, "This is your negligence, Puck ; or did you do this wilfully ?"—"Believe me, king of shadows," answered Puck, "it was a mistake : did not you tell me I should know the man by his Athenian garments ? However, I am not sorry this has happened, for I think their jangling makes excellent sport."—"You heard," said Oberon, "that Demetrius and Lysander are gone to
30 seek a convenient place to fight in. I command you to overhang the night with a thick fog, and lead these quarrelsome lovers so astray in the dark that they shall

not be able to find each other. Counterfeit each of their voices to the other, and with bitter taunts provoke them to follow you, while they think it is their rival's tongue they hear. See you do this till they are so weary they can go no farther; and when you find they are asleep, drop the juice of this other flower into Lysander's eyes, and when he awakes he will forget his new love for Helena, and return to his old passion for Hermia; and then the two fair ladies may each one be happy with the man she loves, and they will think all that has passed a vexatious dream. About this quickly, Puck, and I will go and see what sweet love my Titania has found."

Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon, seeing a clown near her who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep:—"This fellow," said he, "shall be my Titania's true-love"; and, clapping an ass's head over the clown's, it seemed to fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Although Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and rising up, unconscious of what Oberon had done to him, he went towards the bower where the fairy queen slept.

"Ah! what angel is that I see?" said Titania, opening her eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect: "are you as wise as you are beautiful?"

"Why, mistress," said the foolish clown, "if I have wit enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my turn."

"Out of the wood do not desire to go," said the enamoured queen. "I am a spirit of no common rate. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you." She then called four of her fairies:

their names were Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed.

"Attend," said the queen, "upon this sweet gentleman; hop in his walks, and gambol in his sight; feed him with grapes and apricots, and steal for him the honey-bags from the bees. Come, sit with me," said she to the clown, "and let me play with your amiable hairy cheeks, my beautiful ass! and kiss your fair large ears, my gentle joy!"

10 "Where is Pease-blossom?" said the ass-headed clown, not much regarding the fairy queen's courtship, but very proud of his new attendants.

"Here, sir," said little Pease-blossom.

"Scratch my head," said the clown. "Where is Cobweb?"

"Here, sir," said Cobweb.

"Good Mr. Cobweb," said the foolish clown, "kill me the red humble-bee on the top of that thistle yonder; and, good Mr. Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Do
20 not fret yourself too much in the action, Mr. Cobweb, and take care the honey-bag break not; I should be sorry to have you overflowed with a honey-bag. Where is Mustard-seed?"

"Here, sir," said Mustard-seed. "What is your will?"

"Nothing," said the clown, "good Mr. Mustard-seed, but to help Mr. Pease-blossom to scratch. I must go to a barber's, Mr. Mustard-seed, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face."

30 "My sweet love," said the queen, "what will you have to eat? I have a venturous fairy shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch you some new nuts."

"I had rather have a handful of dried pease," said the clown, who with his ass's head had got an ass's appetite; "but, I pray, let none of your people disturb me, for I have a mind to sleep."

"Sleep, then," said the queen, "and I will wind you in my arms. O how I love you! How I dote upon you!"

When the fairy king saw the clown sleeping in the arms of his queen, he advanced within her sight, and reproached her with having lavished her favours upon an ass. 10

This she could not deny, as the clown was then sleeping within her arms, with his ass's head crowned by her with flowers.

When Oberon had teased her for some time, he again demanded the changeling boy, which she, ashamed of being discovered by her lord with her new favourite, did not dare to refuse him.

Oberon, having thus obtained the little boy he had so long wished for to be his page, took pity on the disgraceful situation into which, by his merry contrivance, 20 he had brought his Titania, and threw some of the juice of the other flower into her eyes; and the fairy queen immediately recovered her senses, and wondered at her late dotage, saying how she now loathed the sight of the strange monster.

Oberon likewise took the ass's head from off the clown, and left him to finish his nap with his own fool's head upon his shoulders.

Oberon and his Titania being now perfectly reconciled, he related to her the history of the lovers, and their 30 midnight quarrels; and she agreed to go with him, and see the end of their adventures.

The fairy king and queen found the lovers and their fair ladies, at no great distance from each other, sleeping on a grass-plot: for Puck, to make amends for his former mistake, had contrived with the utmost diligence to bring them all to the same spot, unknown to each other; and he had carefully removed the charm from off the eyes of Lysander with the antidote the fairy king gave to him.

Hermia first awoke, and finding her lost Lysander
10 asleep so near her, was looking at him and wondering at his strange inconstancy. Lysander presently opening his eyes, and seeing his dear Hermia, recovered his reason which the fairy charm had before clouded, and with his reason his love for Hermia; and they began to talk over the adventures of the night, doubting if these things had really happened, or if they had both been dreaming the same bewildering dream.

Helena and Demetrius were by this time awake, and a sweet sleep having quieted Helena's disturbed and
20 angry spirits, she listened with delight to the professions of love which Demetrius still made to her, and which, to her surprise as well as pleasure, she began to perceive were sincere.

These fair night-wandering ladies, now no longer rivals, became once more true friends; all the unkind words which had passed were forgiven, and they calmly consulted together what was best to be done in their present situation. It was soon agreed that, as Demetrius had given up his pretensions to Hermia, he should
30 endeavour to prevail upon her father to revoke the cruel sentence of death which had been passed against her. Demetrius was preparing to return to Athens for this

friendly purpose, when they were surprised with the sight of Egeus, Hernia's father, who came to the wood in pursuit of his runaway daughter.

When Egeus understood that Demetrius would not now marry his daughter, he no longer opposed her marriage with Lysander, but gave his consent that they should be wedded on the fourth day from that time, being the same day on which Hernia had been condemned to lose her life; and on that same day Helena joyfully agreed to marry her beloved and now faithful 10 Demetrius.

The fairy king and queen, who were invisible spectators of this reconciliation, and now saw the happy ending of the lovers' history brought about through the good offices of Oberon, received so much pleasure, that these kind spirits resolved to celebrate the approaching nuptials with sports and revels throughout their fairy kingdom.

And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their pranks, as judging it incredible and strange, 20 they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were visions which they saw in their sleep: and I hope none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to be offended with a pretty harmless Midsummer Night's Dream.

III

THE WINTER'S TALE

LEONTES, King of Sicily, and his queen, the beautiful and virtuous Hermione, once lived in the greatest harmony together. So happy was Leontes in the love of this excellent lady, that he had no wish ungratified, except that he sometimes desired to see again, and to present to his queen, his old companion and schoolfellow, Polixenes, King of Bohemia. Leontes and Polixenes were brought up together from their infancy ; but being, by the death of their fathers, called to reign over their
10 respective kingdoms, they had not met for many years, though they frequently interchanged gifts, letters, and loving embassies.

At length, after repeated invitations, Polixenes came from Bohemia to the Sicilian court, to make his friend Leontes a visit.

At first this visit gave nothing but pleasure to Leontes. He recommended the friend of his youth to the queen's particular attention, and seemed in the presence of his dear friend and old companion to have his felicity quite
20 completed. They talked over old times ; their school-days and their youthful pranks were remembered, and recounted to Hermione, who always took a cheerful part in these conversations.

When, after a long stay, Polixenes was preparing to depart, Hermione, at the desire of her husband, joined her entreaties to his that Polixenes would prolong his visit.

And now began this good queen's sorrow ; for Polixenes refusing to stay at the request of Leontes, was won over by Hermione's gentle and persuasive words to put off his departure for some weeks longer. Upon this, although Leontes had so long known the integrity and honourable principles of his friend Polixenes, as well as the excellent disposition of his virtuous queen, he was seized with an ungovernable jealousy. Every attention Hermione showed to Polixenes, though by her husband's particular desire, and merely to please him, increased the unfortunate king's jealousy ; and from being a loving and a true friend, and the best and fondest of husbands, Leontes became suddenly a savage and inhuman monster. Sending for Camillo, one of the lords of his court, and telling him of the suspicion he entertained, he commanded him to poison Polixenes. 20

Camillo was a good man ; and he, well knowing that the jealousy of Leontes had not the slightest foundation in truth, instead of poisoning Polixenes, acquainted him with the king's master's orders, and agreed to escape with him out of the Sicilian dominions ; and Polixenes, with the assistance of Camillo, arrived safe in his own kingdom of Bohemia, where Camillo lived from that time in the king's court, and became the chief friend and favourite of Polixenes.

The flight of Polixenes enraged the jealous Leontes still more ; he went to the queen's apartment, where the good lady was sitting with her little son Mamillius, who

was just beginning to tell one of his best stories to amuse his mother, when the king entered, and taking the child away, sent Hermione to prison.

Mamillius, though but a very young child, loved his mother tenderly ; and when he saw her so dishonoured, and found she was taken from him to be put into a prison, he took it deeply to heart, and drooped and pined away by slow degrees, losing his appetite and his sleep, till it was thought his grief would kill him.

- 10 The king, when he had sent his queen to prison, commanded Cleomenes and Dion, two Sicilian lords, to go to Delphos, there to inquire of the oracle at the temple of Apollo if his queen had been unfaithful to him.

When Hermione had been a short time in prison, she had a little daughter ; and the poor lady received much comfort from the sight of her pretty baby, and she said to it, " My poor little prisoner, I am as innocent as you are."

- Hermione had a kind friend in the noble-spirited
20 Paulina, who was the wife of Antigonus, a Sicilian lord ; and when the lady Paulina heard her royal mistress had a new baby, she went to the prison where Hermione was confined, and she said to Emilia, a lady who attended upon Hermione, " I pray you, Emilia, tell the good queen, if her Majesty dare trust me with her little babe, I will carry it to the king its father : we do not know how he may soften at the sight of his innocent child."—" Most worthy madam," replied Emilia, " I will acquaint the queen with your noble offer : she was wishing to-day
30 that she had any friend who would venture to present the child to the king."—" And tell her," said Paulina, " that I will speak boldly to Leontes in her defence."—

"May you be for ever blessed," said Emilia, "for your kindness to our gracious queen!" Emilia then went to Hermione, who joyfully gave up her baby to the care of Paulina, for she had feared that no one would dare venture to present the child to its father.

Paulina took the new-born infant, and forcing herself into the king's presence—notwithstanding her husband, fearing the king's anger, endeavoured to prevent her—she laid the babe at its father's feet, and Paulina made a noble speech to the king in defence of Hermione, and 10 she reproached him severely for his inhumanity, and implored him to have mercy on his innocent wife and child. But Paulina's spirited remonstrances only aggravated Leontes' displeasure, and he ordered her husband Antigonus to take her from his presence.

When Paulina went away, she left the little baby at its father's feet, thinking, when he was alone with it, he would look upon it, and have pity upon its helpless innocence.

The good Paulina was mistaken; for no sooner was 20 she gone than the merciless father ordered Antigonus, Paulina's husband, to take the child, and carry it out to sea, and leave it upon some desert shore to perish.

Antigonus, unlike the good Camillo, too well obeyed the orders of Leontes, for he immediately carried the child on shipboard, and put out to sea, intending to leave it on the first desert coast he could find.

So firmly was the king persuaded of the guilt of Hermione, that he would not wait for the return of Cleomenes and Dion, whom he had sent to consult the 30 oracle of Apollo at Delphos; but before the queen was recovered from her grief for the loss of her precious baby,

he had her brought to a public trial before all the lords and nobles of his court. And when all the great lords, the judges, and all the nobility of the land were assembled together to try Hermione, and that unhappy queen was standing as a prisoner before her subjects to receive their judgment, Cleomenes and Dion entered the assembly, and presented to the king the answer of the oracle sealed up ; and Leontes commanded the seal to be broken, and the words of the oracle to be read aloud, and these were
10 the words : “ *Hermione is innocent, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, and the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found.*” The king would give no credit to the words of the oracle : he said it was a falsehood invented by the queen’s friends, and he desired the judge to proceed in the trial of the queen ; but while Leontes was speaking a man entered and told him Prince Mamillius, hearing his mother was to be tried for her life, struck with grief and shame, had suddenly died.

20 Hermione, upon hearing of the death of this dear affectionate child, who had lost his life in sorrowing for her misfortune, fainted ; and Leontes, pierced to the heart by the news, began to feel pity for his unhappy queen, and he ordered Paulina, and the ladies who were her attendants, to take her away, and use means for her recovery. Paulina soon returned and told the king that Hermione was dead.

When Leontes heard that the queen was dead, he repented of his cruelty to her ; and now that he thought
30 his ill usage had broken Hermione’s heart, he believed her innocent ; and he now thought the words of the oracle were true, as he knew “ if that which was lost was

not found," which he concluded was his young daughter, he should be without an heir, the young prince Mamillius being dead ; and he would give his kingdom now to recover his lost daughter : and Leontes gave himself up to remorse, and passed many years in mournful thoughts and repentant grief.

The ship in which Antigonus carried the infant princess out to sea was driven by a storm upon the coast of Bohemia, the very kingdom of the good king Polixenes. Here Antigonus landed, and here he left the little baby. 10

Antigonus never returned to Sicily to tell Leontes where he had left his daughter, for as he was going back to the ship, a bear came out of the woods, and tore him to pieces ; a just punishment on him for obeying the wicked order of King Leontes.

The child was dressed in rich clothes and jewels ; for Hermione had made it very fine when she sent it to Leontes, and Antigonus had pinned a paper to its mantle, with the name of *Perdita* written thereon, and words obscurely intimating its high birth and untoward fate. 20

This poor deserted baby was found by a shepherd. He was a humane man, and so he carried the little Perdita home to his wife, who nursed it tenderly ; but poverty tempted the shepherd to conceal the rich prize he had found, therefore he left that part of the country, that no one might know where he got his riches, and with part of Perdita's jewels he bought herds of sheep, and became a wealthy shepherd. He brought up Perdita as his own child, and she knew not she was any other than a shepherd's daughter. 30

The little Perdita grew up a lovely maiden ; and though she had no better education than that of a

shepherd's daughter, yet so did the natural graces she inherited from her royal mother shine forth in her untutored mind, that no one from her behaviour would have known she had not been brought up in her father's court.

Polixenes, the King of Bohemia, had an only son, whose name was Florizel. As this young prince was hunting near the shepherd's dwelling, he saw the old man's supposed daughter; and the beauty, modesty, 10 and queen-like deportment of Perdita caused him instantly to fall in love with her. He soon, under the name of Doricles, and in the disguise of a private gentleman, became a constant visitor to the old shepherd's house.

Florizel's frequent absences from court alarmed Polixenes; and setting people to watch his son, he discovered his love for the shepherd's fair daughter.

Polixenes then called for Camillo, the faithful Camillo, who had preserved his life from the fury of Leontes, and desired that he would accompany him to the house of 20 the shepherd, the supposed father of Perdita.

Polixenes and Camillo, both in disguise, arrived at the old shepherd's dwelling while they were celebrating the feast of sheep-shearing; and though they were strangers, yet at the sheep-shearing every guest being made welcome, they were invited to walk in and join in the general festivity.

Nothing but mirth and jollity was going forward. Tables were spread, and great preparations were making for the rustic feast. Some lads and lasses were dancing 30 on the green before the house, while others of the young men were buying ribands, gloves, and such toys, of a pedlar at the door.

While this busy scene was going forward, Florizel and Perdita sat quietly in a retired corner, seemingly more pleased with the conversation of each other than desirous of engaging in the sports and silly amusements of those around them.

The king was so disguised that it was impossible his son could know him; he therefore advanced near enough to hear the conversation. The simple yet elegant manner in which Perdita conversed with his son did not a little surprise Polixenes: he said to Camillo, 10
"This is the prettiest low-born lass I ever saw; nothing she does or says but looks like something greater than herself, too noble for this place."

Camillo replied, "Indeed, she is the very cream of curds and cream."

"Pray, my good friend," said the king to the old shepherd, "what fair swain is that talking with your daughter?" "They call him Doricles," replied the shepherd. "He says he loves my daughter; and to speak the truth, there is not a kiss to choose which loves 20 the other best. If young Doricles can get her, she shall bring him that he little dreams of"; meaning the remainder of Perdita's jewels; which, after he had bought herds of sheep with part of them, he had carefully hoarded up for her marriage portion.

Polixenes then addressed his son. "How now, young man!" said he: "your heart seems full of something that takes off your mind from feasting. When I was young, I used to load my love with presents; but you have let the pedlar go, and have bought your lass no 30 toy."

The young prince, who little thought he was talking

to the king his father, replied, "Old sir, she prizes not such trifles; the gifts which Perdita expects from me are locked up in my heart." Then turning to Perdita, he said to her, "O hear me, Perdita, before this ancient gentleman, who it seems was once himself a lover; he shall hear what I profess." Florizel then called upon the old stranger to be a witness to a solemn promise of marriage which he made to Perdita, saying to Polixenes, "I pray you, mark our contract."

10 "Mark your divorce, young sir," said the king, discovering himself. Polixenes then reproached his son for daring to contract himself to this low-born maid, calling Perdita "shepherd's-brat, sheep-hook," and other disrespectful names; and threatening, if ever she suffered his son to see her again, he would put her, and the old shepherd her father, to a cruel death.

The king then left them in great wrath, and ordered Camillo to follow him with Prince Florizel.

When the king had departed, Perdita, whose royal
20 nature was roused by Polixenes' reproaches, said, "Though we are all undone, I was not much afraid; and once or twice I was about to speak, and tell him plainly that the self-same sun which shines upon his palace, hides not his face from our cottage, but looks on both alike." Then sorrowfully she said, "But now I am awakened from this dream, I will queen it no further. Leave me, sir; I will go milk my ewes, and weep."

The kind-hearted Camillo was charmed with the
30 spirit and propriety of Perdita's behaviour; and perceiving that the young prince was too deeply in love to give up his mistress at the command of his royal father,

he thought of a way to befriend the lovers, and at the same time to execute a favourite scheme he had in his mind.

Camillo had long known that Leontes, the King of Sicily, was become a true penitent; and though Camillo was now the favoured friend of King Polixenes, he could not help wishing once more to see his late royal master and his native home. He therefore proposed to Florizel and Perdita, that they should accompany him to the Sicilian court, where he would engage Leontes should protect 10 them, till through his mediation they could obtain pardon from Polixenes, and his consent to their marriage.

To this proposal they joyfully agreed; and Camillo, who conducted everything relative to their flight, allowed the old shepherd to go along with them.

The shepherd took with him the remainder of Perdita's jewels, her baby clothes, and the paper which he had found pinned to her mantle.

After a prosperous voyage, Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the old shepherd, arrived in safety at the 20 court of Leontes. Leontes, who still mourned his dead Hermione and his lost child, received Camillo with great kindness, and gave a cordial welcome to Prince Florizel. But Perdita, whom Florizel introduced as his princess, seemed to engross all Leontes' attention: perceiving a resemblance between her and his dead Queen Hermione, his grief broke out afresh, and he said, such a lovely creature might his own daughter have been, if he had not so cruelly destroyed her. "And then, too," said he to Florizel, "I lost the society and friendship of your 30 brave father, whom I now desire more than my life once again to look upon."

When the old shepherd heard how much notice the king had taken of Perdita, and that he had lost a daughter, who was exposed in infancy, he fell to comparing the time when he found the little Perdita, with the manner of its exposure, the jewels and other tokens of its high birth ; from all which it was impossible for him not to conclude that Perdita and the king's lost daughter were the same.

Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the faithful Paulina,
10 were present when the old shepherd related to the king the manner in which he had found the child, and also the circumstance of Antigonus' death, he having seen the bear seize upon him. He showed the rich mantle in which Paulina remembered Hermione had wrapped the child ; and he produced a jewel which she remembered Hermione had tied about Perdita's neck ; and he gave up the paper which Paulina knew to be the writing of her husband : it could not be doubted that Perdita was Leontes' own daughter ; but oh ! the noble struggles of
20 Paulina, between sorrow for her husband's death, and joy that the oracle was fulfilled, in the king's heir, his long-lost daughter, being found. When Leontes heard that Perdita was his daughter, the great sorrow that he felt that Hermione was not living to behold her child, made him that he could say nothing for a long time but " O thy mother ! thy mother ! "

Paulina interrupted this joyful yet distressful scene with saying to Leontes that she had a statue, newly finished by that rare Italian master Julio Romano, which
30 was such a perfect resemblance of the queen, that would his Majesty be pleased to go to her house and look upon it, he would almost be ready to think it was Hermione

herself. Thither then they all went, the king anxious to see the semblance of his Hermione, and Perdita longing to behold what the mother she never saw did look like.

When Paulina drew back the curtain which concealed this famous statue, so perfectly did it resemble Hermione that all the king's sorrow was renewed at the sight: for a long time he had no power to speak or move.

"I like your silence, my liege," said Paulina; "it the more shows your wonder. Is not this statue very like 10 your queen?"

At length the king said, "Oh, thus she stood, even with such majesty, when I first wooed her. But yet, Paulina, Hermione was not so aged as this statue looks." Paulina replied, "So much the more the carver's excellence, who has made the statue as Hermione would have looked had she been living now. But let me draw the curtain, sire, lest presently you think it moves."

The king then said, "Do not draw the curtain! 20 Would I were dead! See, Camillo, would you not think it breathed? Her eye seems to have motion in it."—"I must draw the curtain, my liege," said Paulina; "you are so transported, you will persuade yourself the statue lives."—"O, sweet Paulina," said Leontes, "make me think so twenty years together. Still methinks there is an air comes from her. What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me, for I will kiss her."—"Good my lord, forbear!" said Paulina. "The ruddiness upon her lip is wet; you will stain your own 30 with oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?"—"No, not these twenty years," said Leontes.

Perdita, who all this time had been kneeling and beholding in silent admiration the statue of her matchless mother, said now, "And so long could I stay here looking upon my dear mother."

"Either forbear this transport," said Paulina to Leontes, "and let me draw the curtain, or prepare yourself for more amazement. I can make the statue move indeed—ay, and descend from off the pedestal and take you by the hand. But then you will think, which I 10 protest I am not, that I am assisted by some wicked powers."

"What you can make her do," said the astonished king, "I am content to look upon. What you can make her speak I am content to hear, for it is as easy to make her speak as move."

Paulina then ordered some slow and solemn music, which she had prepared for the purpose, to strike up, and, to the amazement of all the beholders, the statue came down from off the pedestal and threw its arms 20 around Leontes' neck. The statue then began to speak, praying for blessings on her husband, and on her child, the newly-found Perdita.

No wonder that the statue hung upon Leontes' neck and blessed her husband and her child. No wonder, for the statue was indeed Hermione herself, the real, the living queen!

Paulina had falsely reported to the king the death of Hermione, thinking that the only means to preserve her royal mistress's life, and with the good Paulina Hermione 30 had lived ever since, never choosing Leontes should know she was living till she heard Perdita was found; for though she had long forgiven the injuries which Leontes

had done to herself, she could not pardon his cruelty to his infant daughter.

His dead queen thus restored to life, his lost daughter found, the long-sorrowing Leontes could scarcely support the excess of his own happiness.

Nothing but congratulations and affectionate speeches were heard on all sides. Now the delighted parents thanked Prince Florizel for loving their lowly-seeming daughter, and now they blessed the good old shepherd for preserving their child. Greatly did Camillo and 10 Paulina rejoice that they had lived to see so good an end to all their faithful services.

And as if nothing should be wanting to complete this strange and unlooked-for joy, King Polixenes himself now entered the palace.

When Polixenes first missed his son and Camillo, knowing that Camillo had long wished to return to Sicily, he conjectured he should find the fugitives here; and, following them with all speed, he happened to arrive just at this, the happiest moment of Leontes' 20 life.

Polixenes took a part in the general joy; he forgave his friend Leontes the unjust jealousy he had conceived against him, and they once more loved each other with all the warmth of their first boyish friendship. And there was no fear that Polixenes would now oppose his son's marriage with Perdita. She was no "sheep-hook" now, but the heiress of the crown of Sicily.

Thus have we seen the patient virtues of the long-suffering Hermione rewarded. That excellent lady lived 30 many years with her Leontes and her Perdita, the happiest of mothers and of queens.

IV

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

THERE lived in the palace at Messina two ladies, whose names were Hero and Beatrice. Hero was the daughter, and Beatrice the niece of Leonato, the Governor of Messina.

Beatrice was of a lively temper, and loved to divert her cousin Hero, who was of a more serious disposition, with her sprightly sallies. Whatever was going forward was sure to make matter of mirth for the light-hearted Beatrice.

10 At the time the history of these ladies commences, some young men of high rank in the army, as they were passing through Messina on their return from a war then just ended, in which they had distinguished themselves by their great bravery, came to visit Leonato. Among these were Don Pedro, the Prince of Arragon, and his friend Claudio, who was a lord of Florence, and with them came the wild and witty Benedick, and he was a lord of Padua.

20 These strangers had been at Messina before, and the hospitable governor introduced them to his daughter and his niece as their old friends and acquaintance.

Benedick, the moment he entered the room, began a lively conversation with Leonato and the prince.

Beatrice, who liked not to be left out of any discourse, interrupted Benedick with saying, "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you." Benedick was just such another rattle-brain as Beatrice, yet he was not pleased with this free salutation; he thought it did not become a well-bred lady to be so flippant with her tongue, and he remembered when he was last at Messina that Beatrice used to select him to make her merry jests upon. And as there is no one who so little likes to be made a jest of as those who are 10 apt to take the same liberty themselves, so it was with Benedick and Beatrice: these two sharp wits never met in former times but a perfect war of raillery was kept up between them, and they always parted mutually displeased with each other. Therefore when Beatrice stopped him in the middle of his discourse with telling him nobody marked what he was saying, Benedick, affecting not to have observed before that she was present, said, "What, my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?" And now war broke out afresh between 20 them, and a long jangling argument ensued, during which Beatrice, although she knew he had so well approved his valour in the late war, said that she would eat all he had killed there, and observing the prince take delight in Benedick's conversation, she called him "the prince's jester." This sarcasm sank deeper into the mind of Benedick than all Beatrice had said before. The hint she gave him that he was a coward, by saying she would eat all he had killed, he did not regard, knowing himself to be a brave man; but there is nothing that 30 great wits so much dread as the imputation of buffoonery, because the charge comes sometimes a little too near the

truth; therefore Benedick perfectly hated Beatrice when she called him "the prince's jester."

The modest Lady Hero was silent before the noble guests; and while Claudio was attentively observing the improvement which time had made in her beauty, and was contemplating the exquisite graces of her fine figure (for she was an admirable young lady), the prince was highly amused with listening to the humorous dialogue between Benedick and Beatrice, and he said in
10 a whisper to Leonato, "This is a pleasant-spirited young lady. She were an excellent wife for Benedick." Leonato replied to this suggestion, "O my lord, my lord, if they were but a week married they would talk themselves mad." But though Leonato thought they would make a discordant pair, the prince did not give up the idea of matching these two keen wits together.

When the prince returned with Claudio from the palace, he found that the marriage he had devised between Benedick and Beatrice was not the only one projected
20 in that good company, for Claudio spoke in such terms of Hero, as made the prince guess at what was passing in his heart; and he liked it well, and he said to Claudio, "Do you affect Hero?" To this question Claudio replied, "O my lord, when I was last at Messina, I looked upon her with a soldier's eye, that liked, but had no leisure for loving; but now, in this happy time of peace, thoughts of war have left their places vacant in my mind, and in their room come thronging soft and delicate thoughts, all prompting me how fair young
30 Hero is, reminding me that I liked her before I went to the wars." Claudio's confession of his love for Hero so wrought upon the prince, that he lost no time in soliciting

the consent of Leonato to accept of Claudio for a son-in-law. Leonato agreed to this proposal, and the prince found no great difficulty in persuading the gentle Hero herself to listen to the suit of the noble Claudio, who was a lord of rare endowments and highly accomplished ; and Claudio, assisted by his kind prince, soon prevailed upon Leonato to fix an early day for the celebration of his marriage with Hero.

Claudio was to wait but a few days before he was to be married to his fair lady, yet he complained of the 10 interval being tedious, as, indeed, most young men are impatient when they are waiting for the accomplishment of any event they have set their hearts upon : the prince, therefore, to make the time seem short to him, proposed, as a kind of merry pastime, that they should invent some artful scheme to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with each other. Claudio entered with great satisfaction into this whim of the prince, and Leonato promised them his assistance ; and even Hero said she would do any modest office to help her cousin 20 to a good husband.

The device the prince invented was, that the gentlemen should make Benedick believe that Beatrice was in love with him, and that Hero should make Beatrice believe that Benedick was in love with her.

The prince, Leonato, and Claudio began their operations first, and, watching an opportunity when Benedick was quietly seated reading in an arbour, the prince and his assistants took their station among the trees behind the arbour, so near that Benedick could not choose but 30 hear all they said ; and after some careless talk the prince said, " Come hither, Leonato. What was it you

told me the other day—that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick? I did never think that lady would have loved any man.”—“No, nor I neither, my lord,” answered Leonato. “It is most wonderful that she should so dote on Benedick, whom she in all outward behaviour seemed ever to dislike.” Claudio confirmed all this, with saying that Hero had told him Beatrice was so in love with Benedick, that she would certainly die of grief if he could not be brought to love
10 her; which Leonato and Claudio seemed to agree was impossible, he having been always such a railer against all fair ladies, and in particular against Beatrice.

The prince affected to hearken to all this with great compassion for Beatrice, and he said, “It were good that Benedick were told of this.”—“To what end?” said Claudio: “he would but make sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.”—“And if he should,” said the prince, “it were a good deed to hang him; for Beatrice is an excellent sweet lady, and exceeding wise
20 in everything but in loving Benedick.” Then the prince motioned to his companions that they should walk on, and leave Benedick to meditate upon what he had overheard.

Benedick had been listening with great eagerness to this conversation, and he said to himself when he heard Beatrice loved him, “Is it possible? Sits the wind in that corner?” And when they were gone he began to reason in this manner with himself: “This can be no trick! they were very serious, and they have the truth
30 from Hero, and seem to pity the lady. Love me! Why, it must be requited! I did never think to marry. But when I said I should die a bachelor, I did not think I

should live to be married. They say the lady is virtuous and fair. She is so. And wise in everything but in loving me. Why, that is no great argument of her folly. But here comes Beatrice. By this day, she is a fair lady! I do spy some marks of love in her." Beatrice now approached him, and said with her usual tartness, "Against my will I am sent to bid you to come in to dinner." Benedick, who never felt himself disposed to speak so politely to her before, replied, "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains." And 10 when Beatrice, after two or three more rude speeches, left him, Benedick thought he observed a concealed meaning of kindness under the uncivil words she uttered, and he said aloud, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture."

The gentleman being thus caught in the net they had spread for him, it was now Hero's turn to play her part with Beatrice; and for this purpose she sent for Ursula and Margaret, two gentlewomen who attended upon her; 20 and she said to Margaret, "Good Margaret, run to the parlour; there you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with the prince and Claudio. Whisper in her ear that I and Ursula are walking in the orchard, and that our discourse is all of her. Bid her steal into that pleasant arbour where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun, like ungrateful minions, forbid the sun to enter." This arbour, into which Hero desired Margaret to entice Beatrice, was the very same pleasant arbour where Benedick had so lately been an attentive listener. "I 30 will make her come, I warrant, presently," said Margaret.

Hero, then, taking Ursula with her into the orchard, said to her, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice comes, we will walk up and down this alley, and our talk must be only of Benedick, and when I name him, let it be your part to praise him more than ever man did merit. My talk to you must be how Benedick is in love with Beatrice. Now begin ; for look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs close by the ground, to hear our conference." They then began ; Hero saying, as if in answer to something
10 which Ursula had said, "No, truly, Ursula. She is too disdainful ; her spirits are as coy as wild birds of the rock."—"But are you sure," said Ursula, "that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely ?" Hero replied, "So says the prince and my lord Claudio, and they entreated me to acquaint her with it ; but I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick, never to let Beatrice know of it."—"Certainly," replied Ursula ; "it were not good she knew his love, lest she made sport of it."—"Why, to say the truth," said Hero, "I never yet saw a man, how
20 wise soever, or noble, young, or rarely featured, but she would dispraise him." "Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable," said Ursula. "No," replied Hero ; "but who dare tell her so ? If I should speak, she would mock me into air."—"Oh, you wrong your cousin," said Ursula ; "she cannot be so much without true judgment as to refuse so rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick."—"He hath an excellent good name," said Hero : "indeed, he is the first man in Italy, always excepting my dear Claudio." And now, Hero giving her attendant a hint
30 that it was time to change the discourse, Ursula said, "And when are you to be married, madam ?" Hero then told her that she was to be married to Claudio the

next day, and desired she would go in with her and look at some new attire, as she wished to consult with her on what she would wear on the morrow. Beatrice, who had been listening with breathless eagerness to this dialogue, when they went away, exclaimed, "What fire is in my ears? Can this be true? Farewell, contempt and scorn, and maiden pride, adieu! Benedick, love on! I will requite you, taming my wild heart to your loving hand."

It must have been a pleasant sight to see these old 10 enemies converted into new and loving friends, and to behold their first meeting after being cheated into mutual liking by the merry artifice of the good-humoured prince. But a sad reverse in the fortunes of Hero must now be thought of. The morrow, which was to have been her wedding day, brought sorrow on the heart of Hero and her good father Leonato.

The prince had a half-brother, who came from the wars along with him to Messina. This brother (his name was Don John) was a melancholy, discontented man, 20 whose spirits seemed to labour in the contriving of villanies. He hated the prince his brother, and he hated Claudio, because he was the prince's friend, and he determined to prevent Claudio's marriage with Hero, only for the malicious pleasure of making Claudio and the prince unhappy; for he knew the prince had set his heart upon this marriage, almost as much as Claudio himself; and to effect this wicked purpose, he employed one Borachio, a man as bad as himself, whom he encouraged with the offer of a great reward. This Borachio 30 paid his court to Margaret, Hero's attendant; and Don John, knowing this, prevailed upon him to make

Margaret promise to talk with him from her lady's chamber window that night, after Hero was asleep, and also to dress herself in Hero's clothes, the better to deceive Claudio into the belief that it was Hero; for that was the end he meant to compass by this wicked plot.

Don John then went to the prince and Claudio, and told them that Hero was an imprudent lady, and that she talked with men from her chamber window at
10 midnight. Now this was the evening before the wedding, and he offered to take them that night where they should themselves hear Hero discoursing with a man from her window; and they consented to go along with him, and Claudio said, "If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her, to-morrow in the congregation, where I intended to wed her, there will I shame her." The prince also said, "And as I assisted you to obtain her, I will join with you to disgrace her."

When Don John brought them near Hero's chamber
20 that night, they saw Borachio standing under the window, and they saw Margaret looking out of Hero's window, and heard her talking with Borachio; and, Margaret being dressed in the same clothes they had seen Hero wear, the prince and Claudio believed it was the Lady Hero herself.

Nothing could equal the anger of Claudio, when he had made (as he thought) this discovery. All his love for the innocent Hero was at once converted into hatred, and he resolved to expose her in the church, as he had
30 said he would, the next day; and the prince agreed to this, thinking no punishment could be too severe for the naughty lady who talked with a man from her window

the very night before she was going to be married to the noble Claudio.

The next day, when they were all met to celebrate the marriage, and Claudio and Hero were standing before the priest, and the priest, or friar, as he was called, was proceeding to pronounce the marriage ceremony, Claudio, in the most passionate language, proclaimed the guilt of the blameless Hero, who, amazed at the strange words he uttered, said meekly, "Is my lord well, that he does speak so wide?" 10

Leonato, in the utmost horror, said to the prince, "My lord, why speak not you?"—"What should I speak?" said the prince: "I stand dishonoured, that have gone about to link my dear friend to an unworthy woman. Leonato, upon my honour, myself, my brother, and this grieved Claudio, did see and hear her last night at midnight talk with a man at her chamber window."

Benedick, in astonishment at what he heard, said, "This looks not like a nuptial."

"True, O God!" replied the heart-struck Hero; and 20 then this hapless lady sank down in a fainting-fit, to all appearance dead. The prince and Claudio left the church without staying to see if Hero would recover, or at all regarding the distress into which they had thrown Leonato; so hard-hearted had their anger made them.

Benedick remained, and assisted Beatrice to recover Hero from her swoon, saying, "How does the lady?"—"Dead, I think," replied Beatrice in great agony, for she loved her cousin; and knowing her virtuous principles, she believed nothing of what she had heard spoken 30 against her. Not so the poor old father; he believed the story of his child's shame, and it was piteous to hear

him lamenting over her, as she lay like one dead before him, wishing she might never more open her eyes.

But the ancient friar was a wise man, and full of observation on human nature, and he had attentively marked the lady's countenance when she heard herself accused, and noted a thousand blushing shames to start into her face, and then he saw an angel-like whiteness bear away those blushes, and in her eye he saw a fire that did belie the error that the prince did speak against
10 her maiden truth, and he said to the sorrowing father, "Call me a fool, trust not my reading nor my observation, trust not my age, my reverence, nor my calling, if this sweet lady lie not guiltless here under some biting error."

When Hero recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, the friar said to her, "Lady, what man is he you are accused of?" Hero replied, "They know that do accuse me; I know of none"; then turning to Leonato, she said, "O my father, if you can prove that
20 any man has ever conversed with me at hours unmeet, or that I yesternight changed words with any creature, refuse me, hate me, torture me to death."

"There is," said the friar, "some strange misunderstanding in the prince and Claudio"; and then he counselled Leonato, that he should report that Hero was dead; and he said that the death-like swoon in which they had left Hero would make this easy of belief; and he also advised him that he should put on mourning and erect a monument for her, and do all rites that appertain
30 to a burial. "What shall become of this?" said Leonato; "what will this do?" The friar replied, "This report of her death shall change slander into pity;

that is some good, but that is not all the good I hope for. When Claudio shall hear that she died upon hearing his words, the idea of her life shall sweetly creep into his imagination. Then shall he mourn if ever love had interest in his heart, and wish he had not so accused her ; yea, though he thought his accusation true."

Benedick now said, " Leonato, let the friar advise you ; and though you know how well I love the prince and Claudio, yet, on my honour, I will not reveal this secret to them." 10

Leonato, thus persuaded, yielded ; and he said sorrowfully, " I am so grieved that the smallest twine may lead me." The kind friar then led Leonato and Hero away, to comfort and console them, and Beatrice and Benedick remained alone ; and this was the meeting from which their friends, who contrived the merry plot against them, expected so much diversion—those friends who were now overwhelmed with affliction, and from whose minds all thoughts of merriment seemed for ever banished. 20

Benedick was the first who spoke, and he said, " Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ? "—" Yea, and I will weep a while longer," said Beatrice. " Surely," said Benedick, " I do believe your fair cousin is wronged."—" Ah ! " said Beatrice, " how much might that man deserve of me who would right her ! " Benedick then said, " Is there any way to show such friendship ? I do love nothing in the world so much as you ; is not that strange ? "—" It were as possible," said Beatrice, " for me to say I loved nothing in the world so well as you ; 30 but believe me not, and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin."—" By

my sword," said Benedick, "you love me, and I protest I love you. Come, bid me do anything for you."—"Kill Claudio," said Beatrice. "Ha! not for the wide world," said Benedick; for he loved his friend Claudio, and he believed he had been imposed upon. "Is not Claudio a villain, that has slandered, scorned, and dishonoured my cousin?" said Beatrice: "O that I were a man!"—"Hear me, Beatrice!" said Benedick. But Beatrice would hear nothing in Claudio's defence; and
10 she continued to urge on Benedick to revenge her cousin's wrongs; and she said, "Talk with a man out of the window; a proper saying! Sweet Hero! she is wronged; she is slandered; she is undone. O that I were a man for Claudio's sake! or that I had any friend who would be a man for my sake! but valour is melted into courtesies and compliments. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving."—"Tarry, good Beatrice," said Benedick: "by this hand, I love you."—"Use it for my love some other way than
20 swearing by it," said Beatrice. "Think you, on your soul, that Claudio has wronged Hero?" asked Benedick. "Yea," answered Beatrice; "as sure as I have a thought, or a soul."—"Enough," said Benedick, "I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand Claudio shall render me a dear account! As you hear from me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin."

While Beatrice was thus powerfully pleading with Benedick, and working his gallant temper by the spirit
30 of her angry words to engage in the cause of Hero, and fight even with his dear friend Claudio, Leonato was challenging the prince and Claudio to answer with their

swords the injury they had done his child, who, he affirmed, had died for grief. But they respected his age and his sorrow, and they said, "Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man." And now came Benedick, and he also challenged Claudio to answer with his sword the injury he had done to Hero; and Claudio and the prince said to each other, "Beatrice has set him on to do this." Claudio nevertheless must have accepted this challenge of Benedick, had not the justice of Heaven at the moment brought to pass a better proof of the innocence of Hero 10 than the uncertain fortune of a duel.

While the prince and Claudio were yet talking of the challenge of Benedick, a magistrate brought Borachio as a prisoner before the prince. Borachio had been overheard talking with one of his companions of the mischief he had been employed by Don John to do.

Borachio made a full confession to the prince, in Claudio's hearing, that it was Margaret dressed in her lady's clothes that he had talked with from the window, whom they had mistaken for the Lady Hero herself; 20 and no doubt continued on the minds of Claudio and the prince of the innocence of Hero. If a suspicion had remained, it must have been removed by the flight of Don John, who, finding his villainies were detected, fled from Messina to avoid the just anger of his brother.

The heart of Claudio was sorely grieved when he found he had falsely accused Hero, who, he thought, died upon hearing his cruel words; and the memory of his beloved Hero's image came over him in the rare 30 semblance that he loved it first; and the prince asking him if what he heard did not run like iron through his

soul, he answered, that he felt as if he had taken poison while Borachio was speaking.

And the repentant Claudio implored forgiveness of the old man Leonato for the injury he had done his child ; and promised, that whatever penance Leonato would lay upon him for his fault in believing the false accusation against his betrothed wife, for her dear sake he would endure it.

The penance Leonato enjoined him was, to marry the
10 next morning a cousin of Hero's, who, he said, was now his heir, and in person very like Hero. Claudio, regarding the solemn promise he made to Leonato, said he would marry this unknown lady, even though she were an Ethiop ; but his heart was very sorrowful, and he passed that night in tears, and in remorseful grief, at the tomb which Leonato had erected for Hero.

When the morning came, the prince accompanied Claudio to the church, where the good friar, and Leonato and his niece, were already assembled, to celebrate a
20 second nuptial ; and Leonato presented to Claudio his promised bride ; and she wore a mask, that Claudio might not discover her face. And Claudio said to the lady in the mask, " Give me your hand, before this holy friar ; I am your husband, if you will marry me."—" And, when I lived, I was your other wife," said this unknown lady ; and, taking off her mask, she proved to be no niece (as was pretended), but Leonato's very daughter, the Lady Hero herself. We may be sure that this proved a most agreeable surprise to Claudio, who
30 thought her dead, so that he could scarcely for joy believe his eyes ; and the prince, who was equally amazed at what he saw, exclaimed, " Is not this Hero,

Hero that was dead ? ” Leonato replied, “ She died, my lord, but while her slander lived.” The friar promised them an explanation of this seeming miracle, after the ceremony was ended ; and was proceeding to marry them, when he was interrupted by Benedick, who desired to be married at the same time to Beatrice. Beatrice making some demur to this match, and Benedick challenging her with her love for him, which he had learned from Hero, a pleasant explanation took place ; and they found they had both been tricked into a belief 10 of love, which had never existed, and had become lovers in truth by the power of a false jest ; but the affection, which a merry invention had cheated them into, was grown too powerful to be shaken by a serious explanation ; and, since Benedick proposed to marry, he was resolved to think nothing to the purpose that the world could say against it ; and he merrily kept up the jest, and swore to Beatrice that he took her but for pity, and because he heard she was dying of love for him ; and Beatrice protested, that she yielded upon great persuasion, and 20 partly to save his life, for she heard he was in a consumption. So these two mad wits were reconciled, and made a match of it, after Claudio and Hero were married ; and to complete the history, Don John, the contriver of the villany, was taken in his flight, and brought back to Messina ; and a brave punishment it was to this gloomy, discontented man, to see the joy and feastings which, by the disappointment of his plots, took place at the palace of Messina.

V

TIMON OF ATHENS

TIMON, a lord of Athens, in the enjoyment of a princely fortune, affected a humour of liberality which knew no limits. His almost infinite wealth could not flow in so fast, but he poured it out faster upon all sorts and degrees of people. Not the poor only tasted of his bounty, but great lords did not disdain to rank themselves among his dependents and followers. His table was resorted to by all the luxurious feasters, and his house was open to all comers and goers at Athens. His large wealth
 10 combined with his free and prodigal nature to subdue all hearts to his love : men of all minds and dispositions tendered their services to Lord Timon, from the glass-faced flatterer, whose face reflects as in a mirror the present humour of his patron, to the rough and unbending cynic, who, affecting a contempt of men's persons, and an indifference to worldly things, yet could not stand out against the gracious manners and munificent soul of Lord Timon, but would come (against his nature) to partake of his royal entertainments, and return most
 20 rich in his own estimation if he had received a nod or a salutation from Timon.

If a poet had composed a work which wanted a commendatory introduction to the world, he had no

more to do but to dedicate it to Lord Timon, and the poem was sure of a sale, besides a present purse from the patron, and daily access to his house and table. If a painter had a picture to dispose of, he had only to take it to Lord Timon, and pretend to consult his taste as to the merits of it; nothing more was wanting to persuade the liberal-hearted lord to buy it. If a jeweller had a stone of price, or a mercer rich costly stuffs, which for their costliness lay upon his hands, Lord Timon's house was a ready mart always open, where they might 10 get off their wares or their jewellery at any price, and the good-natured lord would thank them into the bargain, as if they had done him a piece of courtesy in letting him have the refusal of such precious commodities. So that by these means his house was thronged with superfluous purchases, of no use but to swell uneasy and ostentatious pomp; and his person was still more inconveniently beset with a crowd of these idle visitors, lying poets, painters, sharking tradesmen, lords, ladies, needy courtiers, and expectants, who continually filled his 20 lobbies, raining their fulsome flatteries in whispers in his ears, sacrificing to him with adulation as to a god, making sacred the very stirrup by which he mounted his horse, and seeming as though they drank the free air but through his permission and bounty.

Some of these daily dependents were young men of birth, who (their means not answering to their extravagance) had been put in prison by creditors, and redeemed thence by Lord Timon; these young prodigals thenceforward fastened upon his lordship, as if by 30 common sympathy he were necessarily endeared to all such spendthrifts and loose livers, who, not being able

to follow him in his wealth, found it easier to copy him in prodigality and copious spending of what was not their own. One of these flesh-flies was Ventidius, for whose debts, unjustly contracted, Timon but lately had paid down the sum of five talents.

But among this confluence, this great flood of visitors, none were more conspicuous than the makers of presents and givers of gifts. It was fortunate for these men if Timon took a fancy to a dog or a horse, or any piece of
10 cheap furniture which was theirs. The thing so praised, whatever it was, was sure to be sent the next morning with the compliments of the giver for Lord Timon's acceptance, and apologies for the unworthiness of the gift; and this dog or horse, or whatever it might be, did not fail to produce from Timon's bounty, who would not be outdone in gifts, perhaps twenty dogs or horses, certainly presents of far richer worth, as these pretended donors knew well enough, and that their false presents were but the putting out of so much money at large and
20 speedy interest. In this way Lord Lucius had lately sent to Timon a present of four milk-white horses trapped in silver, which this cunning lord had observed Timon upon some occasion to commend; and another lord, Lucullus, had bestowed upon him in the same pretended way of free gift a brace of greyhounds, whose make and fleetness Timon had been heard to admire. These presents the easy-hearted lord accepted without suspicion of the dishonest views of the presenters; and the givers of course were rewarded with some rich return—
30 a diamond or some jewel of twenty times the value of their false and mercenary donation.

Sometimes these creatures would go to work in a more

direct way, and with gross and palpable artifice, which yet the credulous Timon was too blind to see, would affect to admire and praise something that Timon possessed, a bargain that he had bought, or some late purchase, which was sure to draw from this yielding and soft-hearted lord a gift of the thing commended, for no service in the world done for it but the easy expense of a little cheap and obvious flattery. In this way Timon but the other day had given to one of these mean lords the bay courser which he himself rode upon, because his 10 lordship had been pleased to say that it was a handsome beast and went well ; and Timon knew that no man ever justly praised what he did not wish to possess. For Lord Timon weighed his friends' affection with his own, and so fond was he of bestowing, that he could have dealt kingdoms to these supposed friends, and never have been weary.

Not that Timon's wealth all went to enrich these wicked flatterers : he could do noble and praiseworthy actions ; and when a servant of his once loved the 20 daughter of a rich Athenian, but could not hope to obtain her by reason that in wealth and rank the maid was so far above him, Lord Timon freely bestowed upon his servant three Athenian talents, to make his fortune equal with the dowry which the father of the young maid demanded of him who should be her husband. But for the most part, knaves and parasites had the command of his fortune, false friends whom he did not know to be such, but, because they flocked around his person, he thought they must needs love him ; and because they 30 smiled and flattered him, he thought surely that his conduct was approved by all the wise and good. And

when he was feasting in the midst of all these flatterers and mock friends, when they were eating him up, and draining his fortunes dry with large draughts of richest wines drunk to his health and prosperity, he could not perceive the difference of a friend from a flatterer, but to his deluded eyes (made proud with the sight) it seemed a precious comfort to have so many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes (though it was his own fortune which paid all the costs), and with joy they
10 would run over at the spectacle of such, as it appeared to him, truly festive and fraternal meeting.

But while he thus outwent the very heart of kindness, and poured out his bounty, as if Plutus, the god of gold, had been but his steward; while thus he proceeded without care or stop, so senseless of expense that he would neither inquire how he could maintain it, nor cease his wild flow of riot; his riches, which were not infinite, must needs melt away before a prodigality which knew no limits. But who should tel' him so?—his
20 flatterers?—they had an interest in shutting his eyes.

In vain did his honest steward Flavius try to represent to him his condition, laying his accounts before him, begging of him, praying of him, with an importunity that on any other occasion would have been unmannerly in a servant, beseeching him with tears to look into the state of his affairs. Timon would still put him off, and turn the discourse to something else; for nothing is so deaf to remonstrance as riches turned to poverty, nothing is so unwilling to believe its situation, nothing
30 so incredulous to its own true state, and hard to give credit to a reverse. Often had this good steward, this honest creature, when all the rooms of Timon's great

house have been choked up with riotous feeders at his master's cost, when the floors have wept with drunken spilling of wine, and every apartment has blazed with lights and resounded with music and feasting, often had he retired by himself to some solitary spot, and wept faster than the wine ran from the wasteful casks within, to see the mad bounty of his lord, and to think, when the means were gone which brought him praises from all sorts of people, how quickly the breath would be gone of which the praise was made; praises won in feasting 10 would be lost in fasting, and at one cloud of winter showers these flies would disappear.

But now the time was come that Timon could shut his ears no longer to the representations of this faithful steward. Money must be had; and when he ordered Flavius to sell some of his land for that purpose, Flavius informed him, what he had in vain endeavoured at several times before to make him listen to, that most of his land was already sold or forfeited, and that all he possessed at present was not enough to pay the one-half 20 of what he owed. Struck with wonder at this representation, Timon hastily replied, "My lands extended from Athens to Lacedæmon."—"O my good lord," said Flavius, "the world is but a world, and has bounds: were it all yours to give it in a breath, how quickly were it gone!"

Timon consoled himself that no villainous bounty had yet come from him, that if he had given his wealth away unwisely, it had not been bestowed to feed his vices but to cherish his friends; and he bade the kind-hearted 30 steward (who was weeping) to take comfort in the assurance that his master could never lack means while

he had so many noble friends ; and this infatuated lord persuaded himself that he had nothing to do but to send and borrow, to use every man's fortune (that had ever tasted his bounty) in this extremity, as freely as his own. Then, with a cheerful look, as if confident of the trial, he severally despatched messengers to Lord Lucius, to Lords Lucullus and Sempronius, men upon whom he had lavished his gifts in past times without measure or moderation ; and to Ventidius, whom he had lately
10 released out of prison by paying his debts, and who by the death of his father was now come into possession of an ample fortune, and well enabled to requite Timon's courtesy ; to request of Ventidius the return of those five talents which he had paid for him, and of each of those noble lords the loan of fifty talents ; nothing doubting that their gratitude would supply his wants (if he needed it) to the amount of five hundred times fifty talents.

Lucullus was the first applied to. This mean lord had
20 been dreaming overnight of a silver basin and cup, and when Timon's servant was announced, his sordid mind suggested to him that this was surely a making out of his dream, and that Timon had sent him such a present ; but when he understood the truth of the matter, and that Timon wanted money, the quality of his faint and watery friendship showed itself, for with many protestations he vowed to the servant that he had long foreseen the ruin of his master's affairs, and many a time had he come to dinner, to tell him of it, and had come again to
30 supper, to try to persuade him to spend less, but he would take no counsel or warning by his coming ; and true it was that he had been a constant attender (as he

said) at Timon's feasts, as he had in greater things tasted his bounty ; but that he ever came with that intent, or gave good counsel or reproof to Timon, was a base unworthy lie, which he suitably followed up with meanly offering the servant a bribe, to go home to his master and tell him that he had not found Lucullus at home.

As little success had the messenger who was sent to Lord Lucius. This lying lord, who was full of Timon's meat, and enriched almost to bursting with Timon's costly presents, when he found the wind changed, and the fountain of so much bounty suddenly stopped, at first could hardly believe it ; but on its being confirmed, he affected great regret that he should not have it in his power to serve Lord Timon, for unfortunately (which was a base falsehood) he had made a great purchase the day before, which had quite disfurnished him of the means at present—the more beast he, he called himself, to put it out of his power to serve so good a friend ; and he counted it one of his greatest afflictions that his ability should fail him to pleasure such an honourable gentleman.

Who can call any man friend that dips in the same dish with him ? Just of this metal is every flatterer. In the recollection of everybody Timon had been a father to this Lucius, had kept up his credit with his purse ; Timon's money had gone to pay the wages of his servants, to pay the hire of labourers who had sweat to build the fine houses which Lucius's pride had made necessary to him : yet, oh ! the monster which man makes himself when he proves ungrateful ! this Lucius now denied to Timon a sum which, in respect of what

Timon had bestowed upon him, was less than charitable men afford to beggars.

Sempronius, and every one of these mercenary lords to whom Timon applied in their turn, returned the same evasive answer or direct denial; even Ventidius, the redeemed and now rich Ventidius, refused to assist him with the loan of those five talents which Timon had not lent but generously given him in his distress.

Now was Timon as much avoided in his poverty as he
10 had been courted and resorted to in his riches. Now the same tongues which had been loudest in his praises, extolling him as bountiful, liberal, and open-handed, were not ashamed to censure that very bounty as folly, that liberality as profuseness, though it had shown itself folly in nothing so truly as in the selection of such unworthy creatures as themselves for its objects. Now was Timon's princely mansion forsaken, and become a shunned and hated place, a place for men to pass by, not a place as formerly where every passenger must stop
20 and taste of his wine and good cheer: now, instead of being thronged with feasting and tumultuous guests, it was beset with impatient and clamorous creditors, usurers, extortioners, fierce and intolerable in their demands, pleading bonds, interest, mortgages—iron-hearted men that would take no denial nor putting off, that Timon's house was now his jail, which he could not pass nor go in nor out for them, one demanding his due of fifty talents, another bringing in a bill of five thousand crowns, which if he would tell out his blood by drops,
30 and pay them so, he had not enough in his body to discharge drop by drop.

In this desperate and irremediable state (as it seemed)

of his affairs, the eyes of all men were suddenly surprised at a new and incredible lustre which this setting sun put forth. Once more Lord Timon proclaimed a feast, to which he invited his accustomed guests—lords, ladies, all that was great or fashionable in Athens. Lords Lucius and Lucullus came, Ventidius, Sempronius, and the rest. Who more sorry now than these fawning wretches when they found (as they thought) that Lord Timon's poverty was all pretence, and had only been put on to make trial of their loves, to think that they 10 should not have seen through the artifice at the time, and have had the cheap credit of obliging his lordship? Yet who more glad to find the fountain of that noble bounty, which they had thought dried up, still fresh and running? They came dissembling, protesting, expressing deepest sorrow and shame that when his lordship sent to them they should have been so unfortunate as to want the present means to oblige so honourable a friend. But Timon begged them not to give such trifles a thought, for he had altogether forgotten it. And these 20 base, fawning lords, though they had denied him money in his adversity, yet could not refuse their presence at this new blaze of his returning prosperity. For the swallow follows not summer more willingly than men of these dispositions follow the good fortunes of the great, nor more willingly leaves winter than these shrink from the first appearance of a reverse: such summer birds are men. But now with music and state the banquet of smoking dishes was served up; and when the guests had a little done admiring whence the bankrupt Timon could 30 find means to furnish so costly a feast, some doubting whether the scene which they saw was real, as scarce

trusting their own eyes ; at a signal given, the dishes were uncovered, and Timon's drift appeared : instead of those varieties and far-fetched dainties which they expected, that Timon's epicurean table in past times had so liberally presented, now appeared under the covers of these dishes a preparation more suitable to Timon's poverty, nothing but a little smoke and lukewarm water, fit feast for this knot of mouth-friends, whose professions were indeed smoke, and their hearts lukewarm and
10 slippery as the water with which Timon welcomed his astonished guests, bidding them, " Uncover, dogs, and lap ! " and before they could recover their surprise, sprinkling it in their faces, that they might have enough, and throwing dishes and all after them, who now ran huddling out, lords and ladies, with their caps snatched up in haste, a splendid confusion ; Timon pursuing them, still calling them what they were, " Smooth, smiling parasites, destroyers under the mask of courtesy, affable wolves, meek bears, fools of fortune, feast-friends, time-
20 flies ! " They, crowding out to avoid him, left the house more willingly than they had entered it, some losing their gowns and caps, and some their jewels in their hurry, all glad to escape out of the presence of such a mad lord, and the ridicule of his mock banquet.

This was the last feast which ever Timon made, and in it he took farewell of Athens and the society of men ; for, after that, he betook himself to the woods, turning his back upon the hated city and upon all mankind, wishing the walls of that detestable city might sink, and
30 the houses fall upon their owners, wishing all plagues which infest humanity, war, outrage, poverty, diseases, might fasten upon its inhabitants, praying the just gods

to confound all Athenians, both young and old, high and low ; so wishing, he went to the woods, where he said he should find the unkindest beast much kinder than mankind. He stripped himself naked, that he might retain no fashion of a man, and dug a cave to live in, and lived solitary in the manner of a beast, eating the wild roots and drinking water, flying from the face of his kind, and choosing rather to herd with wild beasts, as more harmless and friendly than man.

What a change from Lord Timon the rich, Lord Timon 10 the delight of mankind, to Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater ! Where were his flatterers now ? Where were his attendants and retinue ? Would the bleak air, that boisterous servitor, be his chamberlain, to put his shirt on warm ? Would those stiff trees, that had outlived the eagle, turn young and airy pages to him, to skip on his errands when he bade them ? Would the cold brook, when it was iced with winter, administer to him his warm broths, and caudles when sick of an overnight's surfeit ? Or would the creatures that lived 20 in those wild woods come and lick his hand and flatter him ?

Here on a day when he was digging for roots, his poor sustenance, his spade struck against something heavy, which proved to be gold, a great heap which some miser had probably buried in a time of alarm, thinking to have come again and taken it from its prison, but died before the opportunity had arrived, without making any man privy to the concealment ; so it lay, doing neither good nor harm, in the bowels of the earth, its mother, as if it 30 had never come from thence, till the accidental striking of Timon's spade against it once more brought it to light.

Here was a mass of treasure which, if Timon had retained his old mind, was enough to have purchased him friends and flatterers again ; but Timon was sick of the false world, and the sight of gold was poisonous to his eyes, and he would have restored it to the earth, but that, thinking of the infinite calamities which by means of gold happen to mankind, how the lucre of it causes robberies, oppressions, injustice, briberies, violence, and murder, among men, he had a pleasure in imagining
10 (such a rooted hatred did he bear to his species) that out of this heap, which in digging he had discovered, might arise some mischief to plague mankind. And some soldiers passing through the woods near to his cave at that instant, which proved to be a part of the troops of the Athenian captain Alcibiades, who, upon some disgust taken against the senators of Athens (the Athenians were ever noted to be a thankless and ungrateful people, giving disgust to their generals and best friends), was marching at the head of the same
20 triumphant army which he had formerly headed in their defence, to war against them ; Timon, who liked their business well, bestowed upon their captain the gold to pay his soldiers, requiring no other service from him than that he should with his conquering army lay Athens level with the ground, and burn, slay, kill all her inhabitants ; not sparing the old men for their white beards, for (he said) they were usurers, nor the young children for their seeming innocent smiles, for those (he said) would live, if they grew up, to be traitors ; but to
30 steel his eyes and ears against any sights or sounds that might awaken compassion ; and not to let the cries of virgins, babes, or mothers, hinder him from making one

universal massacre of the city, but to confound them all in his conquest ; and when he had conquered, he prayed that the gods would confound him also, the conqueror : so thoroughly did Timon hate Athens, Athenians, and all mankind.

While he lived in this forlorn state, leading a life more brutal than human, he was suddenly surprised one day with the appearance of a man standing in an admiring posture at the door of his cave. It was Flavius, the honest steward, whom love and zealous affection to his 10 master had led to seek him out at his wretched dwelling, and to offer his services ; and the first sight of his master, the once noble Timon, in that abject condition, naked as he was born, living in the manner of a beast among beasts, looking like his own sad ruins and a monument of decay, so affected this good servant, that he stood speechless, wrapped up in horror, and confounded. And when he found utterance at last to his words, they were so choked with tears that Timon had much ado to know him again, or to make out who it was that had come (so 20 contrary to the experience he had had of mankind) to offer him service in extremity. And being in the form and shape of a man, he suspected him for a traitor, and his tears for false ; but the good servant by so many tokens confirmed the truth of his fidelity, and made it clear that nothing but love and zealous duty to his once dear master had brought him there, that Timon was forced to confess that the world contained one honest man ; yet, being in the shape and form of a man, he could not look upon his face without abhorrence, or hear 30 words uttered from his man's lips without loathing ; and this singly honest man was forced to depart, because

he was a man, and because, with a heart more gentle and compassionate than usual is to man, he bore man's detested form and outward feature.

But greater visitants than a poor steward were about to interrupt the savage quiet of Timon's solitude. For now the day was come when the ungrateful lords of Athens sorely repented the injustice which they had done to the noble Timon. For Alcibiades, like an incensed wild boar, was raging at the walls of their city, and with
10 his hot siege threatened to lay fair Athens in the dust. And now the memory of Lord Timon's former prowess and military conduct came fresh into their forgetful minds, for Timon had been their general in past times, and was a valiant and expert soldier, who alone of all the Athenians was deemed able to cope with a besieging army such as then threatened them, or to drive back the furious approaches of Alcibiades.

A deputation of the senators was chosen in this emergency to wait upon Timon. To him they came in
20 their extremity, to whom, when he was in extremity, they had shown but small regard ; as if they presumed upon his gratitude whom they had disobliged, and had derived a claim to his courtesy from their own most discourteous and unpiteous treatment.

Now they earnestly beseech him, implore him with tears, to return and save that city, from which their ingratitude had so lately driven him ; now they offer him riches, power, dignities, satisfaction for past injuries, and public honours and the public love ; their persons,
30 lives, and fortunes, to be at his disposal, if he will but come back and save them. But Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater, was no longer Lord Timon, the lord of

bounty, the flower of valour, their defence in war, their ornament in peace. If Alcibiades killed his countrymen, Timon cared not. If he sacked fair Athens and slew her old men and her infants, Timon would rejoice. So he told them ; and that there was not a knife in the unruly camp which he did not prize above the reverendest throat in Athens.

This was all the answer he vouchsafed to the weeping, disappointed senators ; only at parting he bade them commend him to his countrymen, and tell them, that 10 to ease them of their griefs and anxieties, and to prevent the consequences of fierce Alcibiades' wrath, there was yet a way left, which he would teach them, for he had yet so much affection left for his dear countrymen as to be willing to do them a kindness before his death. These words a little revived the senators, who hoped that his kindness for their city was returning. Then Timon told them he had a tree, which grew near his cave, which he should shortly have occasion to cut down, and he invited all his friends in Athens, high or low, of what degree 20 soever, who wished to shun affliction, to come and take a taste of his tree before he cut it down ; meaning, that they might come and hang themselves on it, and escape affliction that way.

And this was the last courtesy of all his noble bounties which Timon showed to mankind, and this the last sight of him which his countrymen had ; for not many days after, a poor soldier passing by the sea-beach, which was at a little distance from the woods which Timon frequented, found a tomb on the verge of the sea, with 30 an inscription upon it, purporting that it was the grave of Timon the man-hater, who, " While he lived, did hate

all living men, and dying, wished a plague might consume all caitiffs left ! ”

Whether he finished his life by violence, or whether mere distaste of life and the loathing he had for mankind brought Timon to his conclusion, was not clear, yet all men admired the fitness of his epitaph, and the consistency of his end—dying, as he had lived, a hater of mankind. And some there were who fancied a conceit in the very choice which he made of the sea-beach for
10 his place of burial, where the vast sea might weep for ever upon his grave, as in contempt of the transient and shallow tears of hypocritical and deceitful mankind.

VI

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

THE states of Syracuse and Ephesus being at variance, there was a cruel law made at Ephesus, ordaining that if any merchant at Syracuse was seen in the city of Ephesus, he was to be put to death, unless he could pay a thousand marks for the ransom of his life.

Ægeon, an old merchant of Syracuse, was discovered in the streets of Ephesus, and brought before the duke, either to pay this heavy fine or to receive sentence of death.

Ægeon had no money to pay the fine, and the duke, 10 before he pronounced the sentence of death upon him, desired him to relate the history of his life, and to tell for what cause he had ventured to come to the city of Ephesus, which it was death for any Syracusan merchant to enter.

Ægeon said that he did not fear to die, for sorrow had made him weary of his life, but that a heavier task could not have been imposed upon him than to relate the events of his unfortunate life. He then began his own history, in the following words :— 20

“I was born at Syracuse, and brought up to the profession of a merchant. I married a lady, with whom I lived very happily ; but being obliged to go to Epidam-

num, I was detained there by my business six months, and then, finding I should be obliged to stay some time longer, I sent for my wife, who, as soon as she arrived, became the mother of two sons, and what was very strange, they were both so exactly alike, that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. At the same time that my wife bore these twin boys, a poor woman in the inn where my wife lodged likewise bore two sons, and these twins were as much like each other
10 as my two sons were. The parents of these children being exceedingly poor, I bought the two boys, and brought them up to attend upon my sons.

“My sons were very fine children, and my wife was not a little proud of two such boys; and she daily wishing to return home, I unwillingly agreed, and in an evil hour we got on shipboard; for we had not sailed above a league from Epidamnum before a dreadful storm arose, which continued with such violence, that the sailors, seeing no chance of saving the ship, crowded
20 into the boat to save their own lives, leaving us alone in the ship, which we every moment expected would be destroyed by the fury of the storm.

“The incessant weeping of my wife, and the piteous complaints of the pretty babes, who, not knowing what to fear, wept for fashion, because they saw their mother weep, filled me with terror for them, though I did not myself fear death; and all my thoughts were bent to contrive means for their safety. I tied my youngest son to the end of a small spare mast, such as seafaring
30 men provide against storms; at the other end I bound the youngest of the twin slaves, and at the same time I directed my wife how to fasten the other children in like

manner to another mast. She thus having the care of the two eldest children, and I of the two younger, we bound ourselves separately to these masts with the children ; and but for this contrivance we had all been lost, for the ship split on a mighty rock, and was dashed in pieces, and we, clinging to these slender masts, were supported above the water, where I, having the care of two children, was unable to assist my wife, who with the other children was soon separated from me ; but while they were yet in my sight, they were taken up by a boat 10 of fishermen, from Corinth (as I supposed), and seeing them in safety, I had no care but to struggle with the wild sea-waves, to preserve my dear son and the youngest slave. At length we in our turn were taken up by a ship, and the sailors, knowing me, gave us kind welcome and assistance, and landed us in safety in Syracuse ; but from that sad hour I have never known what became of my wife and eldest child.

“ My youngest son, and now my only care, when he was eighteen years of age, began to be inquisitive after 20 his mother and his brother, and often importuned me that he might take his attendant, the young slave, who had also lost his brother, and go in search of them ; at length I unwillingly gave consent, for though I anxiously desired to hear tidings of my wife and eldest son, yet in sending my younger one to find them, I hazarded the loss of him also. It is now seven years since my son left me ; five years have I passed in travelling through the world in search of him. I have been in farthest Greece, and through the bounds of Asia ; and coasting homewards, I 30 landed here in Ephesus, being unwilling to leave any place unsought that harbours men ; but this day must

end the story of my life, and happy should I think myself in my death, if I were assured my wife and sons were living."

Here the hapless Ægeon ended the account of his misfortunes; and the duke, pitying this unfortunate father, who had brought upon himself this great peril by his love for his lost son, said, if it were not against the laws, which his oath and dignity did not permit him to alter, he would freely pardon him; yet, instead of 10 dooming him to instant death, as the strict letter of the law required, he would give him that day, to try if he could beg or borrow the money to pay the fine.

This day of grace did seem no great favour to Ægeon; for not knowing any man in Ephesus, there seemed to him but little chance that any stranger would lend or give him a thousand marks to pay the fine; and helpless and hopeless of any relief, he retired from the presence of the duke in the custody of a jailer.

Ægeon supposed he knew no person in Ephesus, but 20 at the very time he was in danger of losing his life through the careful search he was making after his youngest son, that son and his eldest son also were both in the city of Ephesus.

Ægeon's sons, besides being exactly alike in face and person, were both named alike, being both called Antipholus, and the two twin slaves were also both named Dromio. Ægeon's youngest son, Antipholus of Syracuse, he whom the old man had come to Ephesus to seek, happened to arrive at Ephesus with his slave Dromio 30 that very same day that Ægeon did; and he being also a merchant of Syracuse, he would have been in the same danger that his father was, but by good fortune he met

a friend, who told him the peril an old merchant of Syracuse was in, and advised him to pass for a merchant of Epidamnus; this Antipholus agreed to do, and he was sorry to hear one of his countrymen was in this danger; but he little thought this old merchant was his own father.

The eldest son of Ægeon (who must be called Antipholus of Ephesus, to distinguish him from his brother Antipholus of Syracuse) had lived at Ephesus twenty years, and, being a rich man, was well able to have paid 10 the money for the ransom of his father's life; but Antipholus knew nothing of his father, being so young when he was taken out of the sea with his mother by the fishermen, that he only remembered he had been so preserved, but he had no recollection of either his father or his mother: the fishermen who took up this Antipholus and his mother and the young slave Dromio, having carried the two children away from her (to the great grief of that unhappy lady), intending to sell them. 20

Antipholus and Dromio were sold by them to Duke Menaphon, a famous warrior, who was uncle to the Duke of Ephesus, and he carried the boys to Ephesus, when he went to visit the duke his nephew.

The Duke of Ephesus taking a liking to young Antipholus, when he grew up made him an officer in his army, in which he distinguished himself by his great bravery in the wars, where he saved the life of his patron the duke, who rewarded his merit by marrying him to Adriana, a rich lady of Ephesus, with whom he was 30 living, his slave Dromio still attending him, at the time his father came there.

Antipholus of Syracuse, when he parted with his friend, who advised him to say he came from Epidamnum, gave his slave Dromio some money to carry to the inn where he intended to dine, and in the meantime he said he would walk about and view the city, and observe the manners of the people.

Dromio was a pleasant fellow ; and when Antipholus was dull and melancholy, he used to divert himself with the odd humours and merry jests of his slave, so that
10 the freedoms of speech he allowed in Dromio were greater than is usual between masters and their servants.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had sent Dromio away, he stood awhile thinking over his solitary wanderings in search of his mother and his brother, of whom in no place where he landed could he hear the least tidings ; and he said sorrowfully to himself, " I am like a drop of water in the ocean, which seeking to find its fellow drop, loses itself in the wide sea. So I, unhappily, to find a mother and a brother, do lose myself."

20 While he was thus meditating on his weary travels, which had hitherto been so useless, Dromio (as he thought) returned. Antipholus, wondering that he came back so soon, asked him where he had left the money. Now, it was not his own Dromio, but the twin-brother that lived with Antipholus of Ephesus, that he spoke to. The two Dromios and the two Antipholuses were still as much alike as Ægeon had said they were in their infancy ; therefore no wonder Antipholus thought it was his own slave returned, and asked him why he came
30 back so soon. Dromio replied, " My mistress sent me to bid you come to dinner. The capon burns, and the pig falls from the spit, and the meat will be all cold

if you do not come home.”—“ These jests are out of season,” said Antipholus : “ where did you leave the money ? ” Dromio still answering that his mistress had sent him to fetch Antipholus to dinner : “ What mistress ? ” said Antipholus. “ Why, your worship’s wife, sir,” replied Dromio. Antipholus having no wife, he was very angry with Dromio, and said, “ Because I familiarly sometimes chat with you, you presume to jest with me in this free manner. I am not in a sportive
humour now : where is the money ? We being strangers 10
here, how dare you trust so great a charge from your own custody ? ” Dromio hearing his master, as he thought him, talk of their being strangers, supposing Antipholus was jesting, replied merrily, “ I pray you, sir, jest as you sit at dinner : I had no charge but to fetch you home, to dine with my mistress and her sister.” Now Antipholus lost all patience, and beat Dromio, who ran home and told his mistress that his master had refused to come to dinner, and said that he had no wife.

Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, was very 20
angry when she heard that her husband said he had no wife, for she was of a jealous temper, and she said her husband meant that he loved another lady better than herself ; and she began to fret, and say unkind words of jealousy and reproach of her husband ; and her sister Luciana, who lived with her, tried in vain to persuade her out of her groundless suspicions.

Antipholus of Syracuse went to the inn, and found Dromio with the money in safety there, and seeing his own Dromio, he was going again to chide him for his 30
free jests, when Adriana came up to him, and not doubting that it was her husband she saw, she began to reproach

him for looking strange upon her (as well he might, never having seen this angry lady before) ; and then she told him how well he loved her before they were married, and that now he loved some other lady instead of her. "How comes it now, my husband," said she, "oh ! how comes it that I have lost your love ?" "Plead you to me, fair dame ?" said the astonished Antipholus. It was in vain he told her he was not her husband, and that he had been in Ephesus but two hours : she insisted
10 on his going home with her ; and Antipholus at last, being unable to get away, went with her to his brother's house, and dined with Adriana and her sister, the one calling him husband, and the other brother, he, all amazed, thinking he must have been married to her in his sleep, or that he was sleeping now. And Dromio, who followed them, was no less surprised, for the cook-maid, who was his brother's wife, also claimed him for her husband.

While Antipholus of Syracuse was dining with his
20 brother's wife, his brother, the real husband, returned home to dinner with his slave Dromio ; but the servants would not open the door, because their mistress had ordered them not to admit any company ; and when they repeatedly knocked, and said they were Antipholus and Dromio, the maids laughed at them, and said that Antipholus was at dinner with their mistress, and Dromio was in the kitchen ; and though they almost knocked the door down, they could not gain admittance, and at last Antipholus went away very angry, and strangely sur-
30 prised at hearing a gentleman was dining with his wife.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had finished his dinner, he was so perplexed at the lady's still persisting in calling

him husband, and at hearing that Dromio had also been claimed by the cook-maid, that he left the house as soon as he could find any pretence to get away ; for though he was very much pleased with Luciana, the sister, yet the jealous-tempered Adriana he disliked very much, nor was Dromio at all better satisfied with his fair wife in the kitchen ; therefore both master and man were glad to get away from their new wives as fast as they could.

The moment that Antipholus of Syracuse had left the 10 house, he was met by a goldsmith, who, mistaking him as Adriana had done for Antipholus of Ephesus, gave him a gold chain, calling him by his name ; and when Antipholus would have refused the chain, saying it did not belong to him, the goldsmith replied he made it by his own orders, and went away, leaving the chain in the hands of Antipholus, who ordered his man Dromio to get his things on board a ship, not choosing to stay in a place any longer where he met with such strange adventures that he surely thought himself bewitched. 20

The goldsmith, who had given the chain to the wrong Antipholus, was arrested immediately after for a sum of money he owed ; and Antipholus, the married brother, to whom the goldsmith thought he had given the chain, happened to come to the place where the officer was arresting the goldsmith, who, when he saw Antipholus, asked him to pay for the gold chain he had just delivered to him, the price amounting to nearly the same sum as that for which he had been arrested. Antipholus denying the having received the chain, and the goldsmith 30 persisting to declare that he had but a few minutes before given it to him, they disputed this matter a

long time, both thinking they were right, for Antipholus knew the goldsmith never gave him the chain, and, so like were the two brothers, the goldsmith was as certain he had delivered the chain into his hands, till at last the officer took the goldsmith away to prison for the debt he owed, and at the same time the goldsmith made the officer arrest Antipholus for the price of the chain ; so that at the conclusion of their dispute, Antipholus and the merchant were both taken away to prison
10 together.

As Antipholus was going to prison, he met Dromio of Syracuse, his brother's slave, and mistaking him for his own, he ordered him to go to Adriana his wife, and tell her to send the money for which he was arrested. Dromio, wondering that his master should send him back to the strange house where he dined, and from which he had just before been in such haste to depart, did not dare to reply, though he came to tell his master the ship was ready to sail ; for he saw Antipholus was
20 in no humour to be jested with. Therefore he went away, grumbling within himself that he must return to Adriana's house, " where," said he, " Dowsabel claims me for a husband ; but I must go, for servants must obey their masters' commands."

Adriana gave him the money, and as Dromio was returning he met Antipholus of Syracuse, who was still in amaze at the surprising adventures he met with, for his brother being well known in Ephesus, there was hardly a man he met in the streets but saluted him as an
30 old acquaintance : some offered him money which they said was owing to him, some invited him to come and see them, and some gave him thanks for kindnesses they

said he had done them, all mistaking him for his brother. A tailor showed him some silks he had bought for him, and insisted upon taking measure of him for some clothes.

Antipholus began to think he was among a nation of sorcerers and witches, and Dromio did not at all relieve his master from his bewildered thoughts, by asking how he got free from the officer who was carrying him to prison, and giving him the purse of gold which Adriana had sent to pay the debt with. This talk of Dromio's 10 of the arrest and of a prison, and of the money he had brought from Adriana, perfectly confounded Antipholus, and he said, " This fellow Dromio is certainly distracted, and we wander here in illusions " ; and quite terrified at his own confused thoughts, he cried out, " Some blessed power deliver us from this strange place ! "

And now another stranger came up to him, and she was a lady, and she too called him Antipholus, and told him he had dined with her that day, and asked him for a gold chain which she said he had promised to give her. 20 Antipholus now lost all patience, and calling her a sorceress, he denied that he had ever promised her a chain, or dined with her, or had even seen her face before that moment. The lady persisted in affirming he had dined with her, and had promised her a chain, which Antipholus still denying, she further said that she had given him a valuable ring, and if he would not give her the gold chain, she insisted upon having her own ring again. On this Antipholus became quite frantic, and again calling her sorceress and witch, and denying all 30 knowledge of her or her ring, ran away from her, leaving her astonished at his words and his wild looks, for nothing

to her appeared more certain than that he had dined with her, and that she had given him a ring, in consequence of his promising to make her a present of a gold chain. But this lady had fallen into the same mistake the others had done, for she had taken him for his brother: the married Antipholus had done all the things she taxed this Antipholus with.

When the married Antipholus was denied entrance into his own house (those within supposing him to be
10 already there), he had gone away very angry, believing it to be one of his wife's jealous freaks, to which she was very subject, and remembering that she had often falsely accused him of visiting other ladies, he, to be revenged on her for shutting him out of his own house, determined to go and dine with this lady, and she receiving him with great civility, and his wife having so highly offended him, Antipholus promised to give her a gold chain which he had intended as a present for his wife: it was the same chain which the goldsmith by
20 mistake had given to his brother. The lady liked so well the thoughts of having a fine gold chain that she gave the married Antipholus a ring, which when, as she supposed (taking his brother for him), he denied, and said he did not know her, and left her in such a wild passion, she began to think he was certainly out of his senses, and presently she resolved to go and tell Adriana that her husband was mad. And while she was telling it to Adriana he came, attended by the jailer (who
30 pay the debt), for the purse of money which Adriana had sent by Dromio, and he had delivered to the other Antipholus.

Adriana believed the story the lady told her of her husband's madness must be true, when he reproached her for shutting him out of his own house, and remembering how he had protested all dinner-time that he was not her husband, and had never been in Ephesus till that day, she had no doubt that he was mad; she therefore paid the jailer the money, and, having discharged him, she ordered her servants to bind her husband with ropes, and had him conveyed into a dark room, and sent for a doctor to come and cure him of his madness, Antipholus 10 all the while hotly exclaiming against this false accusation, which the exact likeness he bore to his brother had brought upon him. But his rage only the more confirmed them in the belief that he was mad, and Dromio persisting in the same story, they bound him also, and took him away along with his master.

Soon after Adriana had put her husband into confinement, a servant came to tell her that Antipholus and Dromio must have broken loose from their keepers, for that they were both walking at liberty in the next 20 street. On hearing this, Adriana ran out to fetch him home, taking some people with her to secure her husband again, and her sister went along with her. When they came to the gates of a convent in their neighbourhood, there they saw Antipholus and Dromio, as they thought, being again deceived by the likeness of the twin brothers.

Antipholus of Syracuse was still beset with the perplexities this likeness had brought upon him. The chain which the goldsmith had given him was about his neck, and the goldsmith was reproaching him for denying 30 that he had it and refusing to pay for it, and Antipholus was protesting that the goldsmith freely gave him the

chain in the morning, and that from that hour he had never seen the goldsmith again.

And now Adriana came up to him, and claimed him as her lunatic husband who had escaped from his keepers, and the men she brought with her were going to lay violent hands on Antipholus and Dromio, but they ran into the convent, and Antipholus begged the abbess to give him shelter in her house.

And now came out the lady abbess herself to inquire
10 into the cause of this disturbance. She was a grave and venerable lady, and wise to judge of what she saw, and she would not too hastily give up the man who sought protection in her house; so she strictly questioned the wife about the story she told of her husband's madness, and she said, "What is the cause of this sudden distemper of your husband's? Has he lost his wealth at sea? Or is it the death of some near friend that has disturbed his mind?" Adriana replied that no such things as these had been the cause. "Perhaps," said
20 the abbess, "he has fixed his affections on some other lady than you his wife, and that has driven him to this state." Adriana said she had long thought the love of some other lady was the cause of his frequent absences from home. Now it was not his love for another, but the teasing jealousy of his wife's temper that often obliged Antipholus to leave his home; and (the abbess suspecting this from the vehemence of Adriana's manner) to learn the truth, she said, "You should have reprehended him for this."—"Why, so I did," replied Adriana.
30 "Ay," said the abbess, "but perhaps not enough." Adriana, willing to convince the abbess that she had said enough to Antipholus on this subject, replied, "It was

the constant topic of our conversation : in bed I would not let him sleep for speaking of it ; at table I would not let him eat for speaking of it ; when I was alone with him I talked of nothing else ; and in company I gave him frequent hints of it. Still all my talk was how vile and bad it was in him to love any lady better than me."

The lady abbess, having drawn this full confession from the jealous Adriana, now said, "And therefore comes it that your husband is mad. The venomous clamour of a jealous woman is a more deadly poison 10 than a mad dog's tooth. It seems his sleep was hindered by your railing ; no wonder that his head is light : and his meat was sauced with your upbraidings ; unquiet meals make ill digestions, and that has thrown him into this fever. You say his sports were disturbed by your brawls : being debarred from the enjoyment of society and recreation, what could ensue but dull melancholy and comfortless despair ? The consequence is, then, that your jealous fits have made your husband mad."

Luciana would have excused her sister, saying she 20 always reprehended her husband mildly, and she said to her sister, "Why do you hear these rebukes without answering them ?" But the abbess had made her so plainly perceive her fault that she could only answer, "She has betrayed me to my own reproof."

Adriana, though ashamed of her own conduct, still insisted on having her husband delivered up to her ; but the abbess would suffer no person to enter her house, nor would she deliver up this unhappy man to the care of the jealous wife, determining herself to use gentle means 30 for his recovery ; and she retired into her house again, and ordered her gates to be shut against them.

During the course of this eventful day, in which so many errors had happened from the likeness the twin brothers bore to each other, old Ægeon's day of grace was passing away, it being now near sunset; and at sunset he was doomed to die if he could not pay the money.

The place of his execution was near this convent, and here he arrived just as the abbess retired into the convent; the duke attending in person, that if any offered to pay
10 the money, he might be present to pardon him.

Adriana stopped this melancholy procession and cried out to the duke for justice, telling him that the abbess had refused to deliver up her lunatic husband to her care. While she was speaking, her real husband and his servant Dromio, who had got loose, came before the duke to demand justice, complaining that his wife had confined him on a false charge of lunacy, and telling in what manner he had broken his bands and eluded the vigilance of his keepers. Adriana saw strangely sur-
20 prised to see her husband, when she thought he had been within the convent.

Ægeon, seeing his son, concluded this was the son who had left him to go in search of his mother and his brother, and he felt secure that this dear son would readily pay the money demanded for his ransom. He therefore spoke to Antipholus in words of fatherly affection, with joyful hope that he should now be released. But to the utter astonishment of Ægeon, his son denied all knowledge of him, as well he might, for this Antipholus had
30 never seen his father since they were separated in the storm in his infancy; but while the poor Ægeon was in vain endeavouring to make his son acknowledge him,

thinking surely that either his griefs and the anxieties he had suffered had so strangely altered him that his son did not know him, or else that he was ashamed to acknowledge his father in his misery ; in the midst of this perplexity the lady abbess and the other Antipholus and Dromio came out, and the wondering Adriana saw two husbands and two Dromios standing before her !

And now these riddling errors, which had so perplexed them all, were clearly made out. When the duke saw the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios both so ¹⁰ exactly alike, he at once conjectured aright of these seeming mysteries, for he remembered the story Ægeon had told him in the morning, and he said these men must be the two sons of Ægeon and their twin slaves.

But now an unlooked-for joy indeed completed the history of Ægeon ; and the tale he had in the morning told in sorrow and under sentence of death, before the setting sun went down was brought to a happy conclusion, for the venerable lady abbess made herself known to be the long-lost wife of Ægeon, and the fond mother of the ²⁰ two Antipholuses.

When the fishermen took the eldest Antipholus and Dromio away from her, she entered a nunnery, and by her wise and virtuous conduct she was at length made lady abbess of this convent ; and, in discharging the rites of hospitality to an unhappy stranger, she had unknowingly protected her own son.

Joyful congratulations and affectionate greetings between these long-separated parents and their children made them for a while forget that Ægeon was yet under ³⁰ sentence of death ; but when they were become a little calm, Antipholus of Ephesus offered the duke the ransom

money for his father's life ; but the duke freely pardoned Ægeon, and would not take the money. And the duke went with the abbess and her newly-found husband and children into the convent, to hear this happy family discourse at leisure of the blessed ending of their adverse fortunes. And the two Dromios' humble joy must not be forgotten : they had their congratulations and greetings too ; and each Dromio pleasantly complimented his brother on his good looks, being well pleased to see his
10 own person (as in a glass) show so handsome in his brother.

Adriana had so well profited by the good counsel of her mother-in-law, that she never after cherished unjust suspicions, or was jealous of her husband.

Antipholus of Syracuse married the fair Luciana, the sister of his brother's wife ; and the good old Ægeon, with his wife and sons, lived at Ephesus many years. Nor did the unravelling of these perplexities so entirely remove every ground of mistake for the future, but that
20 sometimes, to remind them of adventures past, comical blunders would happen, and the one Antipholus, and the one Dromio, be mistaken for the other, making altogether a pleasant and diverting Comedy of Errors.

VII

OTHELLO

BRABANTIO, the rich senator of Venice, had a fair daughter, the gentle Desdemona. She was sought to by divers suitors, both on account of her many virtuous qualities and for her rich expectations. But among the suitors of her own clime and complexion she saw none whom she could affect ; for this noble lady, who regarded the mind more than the features of men, with a singularity rather to be admired than imitated, had chosen for the object of her affections a Moor, a black, whom her father loved and often invited to his house. 10

Neither is Desdemona to be altogether condemned for the unsuitableness of the person whom she selected for her lover. Bating that Othello was black, the noble Moor wanted nothing which might recommend him to the affections of the greatest lady. He was a soldier, and a brave one, and by his conduct in bloody wars against the Turks had risen to the rank of general in the Venetian service, and was esteemed and trusted by the state.

He had been a traveller, and Desdemona, as is the 20 manner of ladies, loved to hear him tell the story of his adventures, which he would run through from his earliest recollection : the battles, sieges, and encounters which

he had passed through ; the perils he had been exposed to by land and by water ; his hair-breadth escapes, when he had entered a breach or marched up to the mouth of a cannon ; and how he had been taken prisoner by the insolent enemy and sold to slavery ; how he demeaned himself in that state, and how he escaped : all these accounts, added to the narration of the strange things he had seen in foreign countries, the vast wildernesses and romantic caverns, the quarries, the rocks, and
10 mountains whose heads are in the clouds ; of the savage nations, the cannibals who are man-eaters, and a race of people in Africa whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. These travellers' stories would so enchain the attention of Desdemona that if she were called off at any time by household affairs, she would despatch with all haste that business, and return, and with a greedy ear devour Othello's discourse. And once he took advantage of a pliant hour, and drew from her a prayer that he would tell her the whole story of his life at large,
20 of which she had heard so much, but only in parts ; to which he consented, and beguiled her of many a tear when he spoke of some distressful stroke which his youth had suffered.

His story being done, she gave him for his pains a world of sighs. She swore a pretty oath that it was all passing strange, and pitiful, wondrous pitiful ; she wished, she said, she had not heard it, yet she wished that Heaven had made her such a man ; and then she thanked him, and told him if he had a friend who loved
30 her, he had only to teach him how to tell his story, and that would woo her. Upon this hint, delivered not with more frankness than modesty, accompanied with a

certain bewitching prettiness, and blushes, which Othello could not but understand, he spoke more openly of his love, and in this golden opportunity gained the consent of the generous Lady Desdemona privately to marry her.

Neither Othello's colour nor his fortune were such that it could be hoped Brabantio would accept him for a son-in-law. He had left his daughter free; but he did expect that, as the manner of noble Venetian ladies was, she would choose ere long a husband of senatorial rank 10 or expectations. But in this he was deceived; Desdemona loved the Moor, though he was black, and devoted her heart and fortunes to his valiant parts and qualities. So was her heart subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she had selected for a husband, that his very colour, which to all but this discerning lady would have proved an insurmountable objection, was by her esteemed above all the white skins and clear complexions of the young Venetian nobility, her suitors.

Their marriage—which, though privately carried out, 20 could not long be kept a secret—came to the ears of the old man Brabantio, who appeared in a solemn council of the senate as an accuser of the Moor Othello, who, by spells and witchcraft, he maintained, had seduced the affections of the fair Desdemona to marry him without the consent of her father, and against the obligations of hospitality.

At this juncture of time it happened that the state of Venice had immediate need of the services of Othello, news having arrived that the Turks, with mighty pre- 30 paration, had fitted out a fleet, which was bending its course to the island of Cyprus, with intent to regain that

strong post from the Venetians, who then held it. In this emergency the state turned its eyes upon Othello, who alone was deemed adequate to conduct the defence of Cyprus against the Turks; so that Othello, now summoned before the senate, stood in their presence at once as a candidate for a great state employment, and as a culprit charged with offences, which by the laws of Venice were made capital.

The age and senatorial character of old Brabantio
10 commanded a most patient hearing from that grave assembly; but the incensed father conducted his accusation with so much intemperance, producing likelihoods and allegations for proofs, that when Othello was called upon for his defence he had only to relate a plain tale of the course of his love, which he did with such an artless eloquence, recounting the whole story of his wooing, as we have related it above, and delivered his speech with so noble a plainness—the evidence of truth—that the duke, who sat as chief judge, could not
20 help confessing that a tale so told would have won his daughter too; and the spells and conjurations, which Othello had used in his courtship, plainly appeared to have been no more than the honest arts of men in love; and the only witchcraft which he had used, the faculty of telling a soft tale to win a lady's ear.

This statement of Othello was confirmed by the testimony of the Lady Desdemona herself, who appeared in court, and professing a duty to her father for life and education, challenged leave of him to profess a yet
30 higher duty to her lord and husband, even so much as her mother had shown in preferring him (Brabantio) above *her* father.

The old senator, unable to maintain his plea, called the Moor to him with many expressions of sorrow, and, as an act of necessity, bestowed upon him his daughter, whom, if he had been free to withhold her (he told him), he would with all his heart have kept from him, adding that he was glad at soul that he had no other child, for this behaviour of Desdemona would have taught him to be a tyrant, and hang clogs on them for her desertion.

This difficulty being got over, Othello, to whom custom had rendered the hardships of a military life as natural 10 as food and rest are to other men, readily undertook the management of the wars in Cyprus, and Desdemona, preferring the honour of her lord (though with danger) before the indulgence of those idle delights in which new-married people usually waste their time, cheerfully consented to his going.

No sooner were Othello and his lady landed in Cyprus, than news arrived that a desperate tempest had dispersed the Turkish fleet, and thus the island was secured from any immediate apprehension of an attack. But the war 20 which Othello was to suffer was now beginning, and the enemies which malice stirred up against his innocent lady proved in their nature more deadly than strangers or infidels.

Among all the general's friends, no one possessed the confidence of Othello more entirely than Cassio. Michael Cassio was a young soldier, a Florentine, gay, amorous, and of pleasing address—favourite qualities with women. He was handsome and eloquent, and exactly such a person as might alarm the jealousy of a man advanced 30 in years (as Othello in some measure was), who had married a young and beautiful wife ; but Othello was as

free from jealousy as he was noble, and as incapable of suspecting, as of doing, a base action. He had employed this Cassio in his love affair with Desdemona, and Cassio had been a sort of go-between in his suit ; for Othello, fearing that himself had not those soft parts of conversation which please ladies, and finding these qualities in his friend, would often depute Cassio to go (as he phrased it) a-courting for him, such innocent simplicity being rather an honour than a blemish to the character of the valiant
10 Moor ; so that no wonder if, next to Othello himself (but at far distance, as beseems a virtuous wife), the gentle Desdemona loved and trusted Cassio. Nor had the marriage of this couple made any difference in their behaviour to Michael Cassio. He frequented their house, and his free and rattling talk was no unpleasing variety to Othello, who was himself of a more serious temper, for such tempers are observed often to delight in their contraries, as a relief from the oppressive excess of their own ; and Desdemona and Cassio would talk and
20 laugh together, as in the days when he went a-courting for his friend.

Othello had lately promoted Cassio to be lieutenant, a place of trust, and nearest to the general's person. This promotion gave great offence to Iago, an older officer, who thought he had a better claim than Cassio, and would often ridicule Cassio, as a fellow fit only for the company of ladies, and one that knew no more of the art of war, or how to set an army in array for battle, than a girl. Iago hated Cassio, and he hated Othello, as
30 well for favouring Cassio, as for an unjust suspicion which he had lightly taken up against Othello, that the Moor was too fond of Iago's wife Emilia. From these

imaginary provocations, the plotting mind of Iago conceived a horrid scheme of revenge, which should involve both Cassio, the Moor, and Desdemona—in one common ruin.

Iago was artful, and had studied human nature deeply, and he knew that of all the torments which afflict the mind of man (and far beyond bodily torture), the pains of jealousy were the most intolerable and had the sorest sting. If he could succeed in making Othello jealous of Cassio, he thought it would be an exquisite plot of revenge, and might end in the death of Cassio or Othello, or of both—he cared not.

The arrival of the general and his lady in Cyprus, meeting with the news of the dispersion of the enemy's fleet, made a sort of holiday in the island. Everybody gave themselves up to feasting and making merry. Wine flowed in abundance, and cups went round to the health of the black Othello, and his lady the fair Desdemona.

Cassio had the direction of the guard that night, with 20 a charge from Othello to keep the soldiers from excess in drinking, that no brawl might arise to fright the inhabitants, or disgust them with the new landed forces. That night Iago began his deep-laid plans of mischief. Under colour of loyalty and love to the general, he enticed Cassio to make rather too free with the bottle, a great fault in an officer upon guard. Cassio for a time resisted, but he could not long hold out against the honest freedom which Iago knew how to put on, but kept swallowing glass after glass (as Iago still plied him 30 with drink and encouraging songs), and Cassio's tongue ran over in praise of the Lady Desdemona, whom he

again and again toasted, affirming that she was a most exquisite lady, until at last the enemy which he put into his mouth stole away his brains ; and, upon some provocation given him by a fellow whom Iago had set on, swords were drawn, and Montano, a worthy officer, who interfered to appease the dispute, was wounded in the scuffle. The riot now began to be general, and Iago, who had set on foot the mischief, was foremost in spreading the alarm, causing the castle bell to be rung
10 (as if some dangerous mutiny, instead of a mere slight drunken quarrel, had arisen). The alarm-bell ringing, awakened Othello, who, dressing in a hurry, and coming to the scene of action, questioned Cassio of the cause. Cassio was now come to himself, the effect of the wine having a little gone off, but was too much ashamed to reply ; and Iago, pretending a great reluctance to accuse Cassio, but, as it were, forced into it by Othello, who insisted to know the truth, gave an account of the whole matter (leaving out his own share in it, which
20 Cassio was too far gone to remember) in such a manner as, while he seemed to make Cassio's offence less, did indeed make it appear greater than it was. The result was that Othello, who was a strict observer of discipline, was compelled to take away Cassio's place of lieutenant from him.

Thus did Iago's first artifice succeed completely ; he had now undermined his hated rival and thrust him out of his place : but a further use was hereafter to be made of the adventure of this disastrous night.

30 Cassio, whom this misfortune had entirely sobered, now lamented to his seeming friend Iago that he should have been such a fool as to transform himself into a

beast. He was undone, for how could he ask the general for his place again? He would tell him he was a drunkard. He despised himself. Iago, affecting to make light of it, said that he or any man living might be drunk upon occasion; it remained now to make the best of a bad bargain. The general's wife was now the general, and could do anything with Othello; that he were best to apply to the Lady Desdemona to mediate for him with her lord; that she was of a frank, obliging disposition, and would readily undertake a good office 10 of this sort, and set Cassio right again in the general's favour, and then this crack in their love would be made stronger than ever. A good advice of Iago, if it had not been given for wicked purposes, which will after appear.

Cassio did as Iago advised him, and made application to the Lady Desdemona, who was easy to be won over in any honest suit; and she promised Cassio that she would be his solicitor with her lord, and rather die than give up his cause. This she immediately set about in so earnest and pretty a manner, that Othello, who was 20 mortally offended with Cassio, could not put her off. When he pleaded delay, and that it was too soon to pardon such an offender, she would not be beat back, but insisted that it should be the next night, or the morning after, or the next morning to that at furthest. Then she showed how penitent and humble poor Cassio was, and that his offence did not require so sharp a check. And when Othello still hung back, "What! my lord," said she, "that I should have so much to do to plead for Cassio—Michael Cassio, that came a-courting 30 for you, and oftentimes when I have spoken in dispraise of you has taken your part! I count this but a little

thing to ask of you. When I mean to try your love indeed, I shall ask a weighty matter." Othello could deny nothing to such a pleader, and only requesting that Desdemona would leave the time to him, promised to receive Michael Cassio again into favour.

It happened that Othello and Iago had entered into the room where Desdemona was, just as Cassio, who had been imploring her intercession, was departing at the opposite door; and Iago, who was full of art, said in a
10 low voice as if to himself, "I like not that." Othello took no great notice of what he said—indeed, the conference which immediately took place with his lady put it out of his head; but he remembered it afterwards. For when Desdemona was gone, Iago, as if for mere satisfaction of his thought, questioned Othello whether Michael Cassio, when Othello was courting his lady, knew of his love. To this the general answered in the affirmative, and adding that he had gone between them very often during the courtship, Iago knitted his brow,
20 as if he had got fresh light of some terrible matter, and cried, "Indeed!" This brought into Othello's mind the words which Iago had let fall upon entering the room and seeing Cassio with Desdemona, and he began to think there was some meaning in all this; for he deemed Iago to be a just man and full of love and honesty, and what in a false knave would be tricks, in him seemed to be the natural workings of an honest mind, big with something too great for utterance; and Othello prayed Iago to speak what he knew, and to give his worst
30 thoughts words.

"And what," said Iago, "if some thoughts very vile should have intruded into my breast, as where is the

palace into which foul things do not enter ? ” Then Iago went on to say, what a pity it were if any trouble should arise to Othello out of his imperfect observations ; that it would not be for Othello’s peace to know his thoughts ; that people’s good names were not to be taken away for slight suspicions. And when Othello’s curiosity was raised almost to distraction with these hints and scattered words, Iago, as if in earnest care for Othello’s peace of mind, besought him to beware of jealousy ; with such art did this villain raise suspicions 10 in the unguarded Othello, by the very caution which he pretended to give him against suspicion. “ I know,” said Othello, “ that my wife is fair, loves company and feasting, is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well ; but where virtue is, these qualities are virtuous. I must have proof before I think her dishonest.” Then Iago, as if glad that Othello was slow to believe ill of his lady, frankly declared that he had no proof, but begged Othello to observe her behaviour well when Cassio was by ; not to be jealous nor too secure neither, for that he (Iago) 20 knew the dispositions of the Italian ladies, his countrywomen, better than Othello could do ; and that in Venice the wives let Heaven see many pranks they dared not show their husbands. Then he artfully insinuated that Desdemona deceived her father in marrying with Othello, and carried it so closely that the poor old man thought that witchcraft had been used. Othello was much moved with this argument, which brought the matter home to him ; for if she had deceived her father, why might she not deceive her husband ? 30

Iago begged pardon for having moved him ; but Othello, assuming an indifference, while he was really

shaken with inward grief at Iago's words, begged him to go on, which Iago did with many apologies, as if unwilling to produce anything against Cassio, whom he called his friend : he then came strongly to the point, and reminded Othello how Desdemona had refused many suitable matches of her own clime and complexion, and had married him, a Moor, which showed unnatural in her, and proved her to have a headstrong will ; and when her better judgment returned, how probable it was she
10 would fall upon comparing Othello with the fine forms and clear white complexions of the young Italians her countrymen. He concluded with advising Othello to put off his reconciliation with Cassio a little longer, and in the meanwhile to note with what earnestness Desdemona should intercede in his behalf, for that much would be seen in that. So mischievously did this artful villain lay his plots to turn the gentle qualities of this innocent lady into her destruction, and make a net for her out of her own goodness to entrap her : first setting Cassio on
20 to entreat her mediation, and then out of that very mediation contriving stratagems for her ruin.

The conference ended with Iago's begging Othello to account his wife innocent, until he had more decisive proof ; and Othello promised to be patient ; but from that moment the deceived Othello never tasted content of mind. Poppy, nor the juice of mandragora, nor all the sleeping potions in the world, could ever again restore to him that sweet rest which he had enjoyed but yesterday. His occupation sickened upon him. He no
30 longer took delight in arms. His heart, that used to be roused at the sight of troops, and banners, and battle array, and would stir and leap at the sound of a drum,

or a trumpet, or a neighing war-horse, seemed to have lost all that pride and ambition which are a soldier's virtue, and his military ardour and all his old joys forsook him. Sometimes he thought his wife honest, and at times he thought her not so; sometimes he thought Iago just, and at times he thought him not so; then he would wish that he had never known of it—he was not the worse for her loving Cassio, so long as he knew it not. Torn in pieces with these distracting thoughts, he once laid hold on Iago's throat, and 10 demanded proof of Desdemona's guilt, or threatened instant death for his having belied her. Iago, feigning indignation that his honesty should be taken for a vice, asked Othello if he had not sometimes seen a handkerchief spotted with strawberries in his wife's hand. Othello answered that he had given her such a one, and that it was his first gift. "That same handkerchief," said Iago, "did I see Michael Cassio this day wipe his face with."—"If it be as you say," said Othello, "I will not rest till a wide revenge swallow them up: and first, 20 for a token of your fidelity, I expect that Cassio shall be put to death within three days; and for that fair devil" (meaning his lady), "I will withdraw and devise some swift means of death for her."

Trifles light as air are to the jealous proofs as strong as Holy Writ. A handkerchief of his wife's seen in Cassio's hand was motive enough to the deluded Othello to pass sentence of death upon them both, without once inquiring how Cassio came by it. Desdemona had never given such a present to Cassio, nor would this constant 30 lady have wronged her lord with doing so naughty a thing as giving his presents to another man; both Cassio

and Desdemona were innocent of any offence against Othello : but the wicked Iago, whose spirits never slept in contrivance of villany, had made his wife (a good but a weak woman) steal this handkerchief from Desdemona, under the pretence of getting the work copied, but in reality to drop it in Cassio's way, where he might find it, and give a handle to Iago's suggestion that it was Desdemona's present.

Othello, soon after meeting his wife, pretended that
10 he had a headache—as he might indeed with truth—and desired her to lend him her handkerchief to hold to his temples. She did so. “Not this,” said Othello, “but that handkerchief I gave you.” Desdemona had it not about her, for indeed it was stolen, as we have related. “How !” said Othello, “this is a fault indeed. That handkerchief an Egyptian woman gave to my mother : the woman was a witch and could read people's thoughts ; she told my mother while she kept it it would make her amiable, and my father would love her ; but
20 if she lost it or gave it away, my father's fancy would turn, and he would loathe her as much as he had loved her. She, dying, gave it me, and bade me if I ever married to give it to my wife. I did so. Take heed of it ; make it a darling as precious as your eye.” “Is it possible ?” said the affrighted lady. “'Tis true,” continued Othello ; “it is a magical handkerchief. A sibyl, that had lived in the world two hundred years, in a fit of prophetic fury worked it ; the silkworms that furnished the silk were hallowed, and it was dyed in
30 mummy of maidens' hearts conserved.” Desdemona, hearing the wondrous virtues of the handkerchief, was ready to die with fear, for she plainly perceived she had

lost it, and with it, she feared, the affections of her husband. Then Othello started and looked as if he were going to do some rash thing, and still he demanded the handkerchief, which when she could not produce, she tried to divert her husband from too serious thoughts, and cheerfully told him she saw all his talk about the handkerchief was only to put her off from her suit about Michael Cassio, whom she went on to praise, as Iago had foretold, till Othello in perfect distraction burst out of the room, and then Desdemona, though unwillingly, 10 began to suspect her lord was jealous.

What cause she could have ministered to him she knew not; and then she accused herself for accusing the noble Othello, and thought to be sure some untoward news from Venice, or some state troubles, had puddled his spirits, and made his temper not so sweet as formerly. And she said, "Men are not gods, and we must not look for that observance from them when they are married which they show us on the bridal day"; and she beshrewed herself for so unkindly judging of his unkindness. 20

Again Othello and Desdemona met, and he accused her more plainly of being unfaithful and of loving another man, but he did not name whom. And Othello wept, and Desdemona said, "Alas! the heavy day! why do you weep?" And Othello told her he could have borne all sorts of evils with fortitude—poverty, and disease, and disgrace, but her infidelity had broken his heart; and he called her a weed, that looked so fair and smelt so sweet that the sense ached at it, and wished she had never been born. And when he had left her, this 30 innocent lady was so stupefied with wonder at her lord's untrue suspicion of her that a weight-like sleep came

over her, and she only desired her attendant to make her bed and to lay her wedding sheets upon it, saying that when people teach their babies, they do it by gentle means and easy tasks, and Othello might have chid her so, for in good truth she was but a child when she was chidden. And this was all the complaint which this gentle lady made.

Desdemona being retired to bed, expecting her husband would follow her, soon fell into a slumber, the effect of
10 her troubled spirits, when Othello entered the chamber, full of the black purpose which he had meditated of putting his lady to death. But when he saw her asleep, he thought he would not shed her blood, nor scar that white skin of hers, more white than alabaster. But he was resolved she should die, else, as he said, she would live to betray more men as she had done him. Then he kissed her for the last time, as he said, and that kiss was so sweet he must needs kiss her again ; and he wept, but he said they were cruel tears.

20 Desdemona was awakened with his kisses, and she looked upon Othello, and she saw him gnaw his under lip, and roll his eyes, and she knew he was always fatal when he looked so ; and he bade her prepare for death and to say her prayers, for he would not kill her soul. And this innocent wife, as she lay at his mercy, begged for compassion and to know her fault ; and then he named Cassio, and the handkerchief which, he said, she had given him ; and as the guiltless lady was proceeding to clear herself, he suddenly would hear no more, but cover-
30 ing her up in the bedclothes, stifled her till she died !

In this instant of time was brought into the house Cassio, wounded and bleeding, whom Iago had set one

of his creatures on to assassinate ; but the fellow not succeeding in his attempt to kill Cassio—whom he wounded, but not mortally—and being himself killed by Iago to prevent discovery, in his pockets were found certain letters, which made the guilt of Iago and the innocence of Cassio clear beyond all doubt : and Cassio now came to beg pardon of Othello, and to ask wherein he had offended him, that he had employed Iago to murder him.

This discovery was as a thunder-stroke to Othello, 10 who now plainly saw that he was no better than a murderer, and that his wife—poor innocent lady !—had been ever faithful to him ; the extreme anguish of which discovery making life insupportable, he fell upon his sword, and throwing himself upon the body of his dear injured lady, expired.

These rash acts raised much passion of horror and amazement in the bystanders, for Othello had borne a fair reputation, and till he was wrought upon by the arts of a villain, which his own noble nature never gave 20. him leave to suspect, he was a loving and a doting husband. He had loved not wisely, but too well ; and his manly eyes, when he learned his mistake, though not used to weep on every small occasion, dropped tears as fast as Arabian trees their gum. And when he was dead, all his former merits and his valiant acts were remembered. Nothing now remained for his successor but to put the utmost censure of the law in force against Iago, who was executed with strict tortures, and to send word to the state of Venice of the lamentable death of 30. their renowned general.

NOTES.

The Notes are mainly a glossary of words that will either not be found in an ordinary school dictionary, or found with a modern meaning that will not be the meaning here. The *Tales from Shakespeare* contain many words used in senses which they bore in the seventeenth century (in Shakespeare and the Authorised Version of the Bible), but which they bear no longer in ordinary speech.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

- P. 1, l. 18. **nice** : delicate, exact, scrupulous.
P. 3, l. 28. **grisly** : grey. (Look up in your dictionary *grizzled* and *grisly*, and note the difference in meaning.)
29. **sable silvered** : black tinged with white.
31. **addressed itself to motion** : prepared to move its lips
P. 4, l. 3. **relation** : story.
P. 5, l. 1. **bestowed** : stowed away, placed.
P. 7, l. 6. **affected** : sought, aimed at. In l. 24 it means 'pretended.'
19. **tenders** : offers.
P. 9, l. 9. **still** : constantly.
P. 11, l. 21. **wormwood** : a plant with a bitter taste ; hence emblematic of bitter regret.
P. 12, l. 2. **resolved** : explained.
8. **closet** : small private apartment.
13. **let slip** : omit.
15. **import** : be important for.
20. **crooked** : not straightforward and honourable.
23. **tax** : blame.
24. **roundest** : most direct, plain-spoken.

P. 14, l. 20. **Apollo** : the Sun-god, generally represented with an abundance of curls.

22. **Mercury** : the messenger of the gods.

heaven-kissing : so high as to seem as though it touched the sky.

P. 18, l. 16. **discovering** : revealing.

23. **to brave** : to challenge, defy.

P. 20, l. 29. **complete** : perfect.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

P. 23, l. 14. **changeling boy** : a human child carried off by the fairies. (The word generally means the ugly or puny child left behind by the fairies in exchange for the handsome or healthy child stolen.)

P. 24, l. 4. **shrewd** : mischievous. *Knavish* has much the same meaning.

15. **crab** : crab-apple, which in Shakespeare's day was roasted and put into warm spiced ale.

16. **goody** : an agreeable-looking old woman.

23. **wasted** : spent, consumed. (Cp. a *wasted* candle.)

26. **Love in Idleness** : the heart's-ease or common pansy.

P. 30, l. 4. **sampler** : a piece of embroidery worked by girls as a *sample* of their skill.

P. 31, l. 13. **clown** : a loutish countryman.

30. **rate** : rank, estimation.

P. 32, l. 20. **fret** : tire.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

P. 39, l. 14. **aggravated** : look up the derivation and meaning of this ill-used word and notice that it is correctly used here.

31. **Delphos** : the seat of the temple and oracle of Apollo in Northern Greece ; in the history books it is called Delphi.

P. 41, l. 19. **Perdita** : a Latin name meaning 'Lost one.'

P. 42, l. 31. **toys** : trifles.

P. 43, l. 4. **silly** : simple, innocent.

P. 44, l. 26. **queen it** : play the part of a queen.

P. 46, l. 29. **Julio Romano** : a famous Roman painter and architect of the sixteenth century.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

P. 50, l. 7. **going forward** : we say 'going on.'

P. 51, l. 3. **still** : constantly.

4. **rattle-brain** : a noisy, giddy person.

18. **affecting** : pretending.

23. **approved** : proved.

P. 52, l. 23. **affect** : have feelings of affection for, love.

P. 53, l. 20. **do any modest office** : give whatever help she reasonably could.

P. 55, l. 3. **argument** : proof.

31. **presently** : immediately.

P. 56, l. 7. **like a lapwing** : the lapwing (or peewit) tries to draw away intruders from its nest or young by fluttering along the ground, as though wounded, in an opposite direction.

20. **rarely featured** ; exceptionally good-looking. Cp. *rare*, l. 26.

P. 59, l. 10. **wide of the mark**, so far from the real truth.

P. 61, l. 3. **idea of her life** : her image when she was alive. For *idea*=mental picture, cp. *Richard III.*, Act iii. Sc. 7, l. 13 :

"Your lineaments,
Being the right idea of your father."

P. 62, l. 12. **proper** : appropriate, reasonable (said in bitter irony).

25. **shall render me a dear account** : shall pay me dearly. *Dear* almost=dire, grievous.

P. 63, l. 31. **semblance** : appearance, form.

P. 65, l. 26. **brave** : fine (ironical).

TIMON OF ATHENS.

P. 66, l. 2. **affected** : was inclined to.

12. **glass-faced**. What is the force of this epithet ?

P. 67, l. 2. **present purse** : one there and then presented.

P. 68, l. 3. **flesh-flies** : persons who prey upon the weaknesses of others, just as flies deposit their eggs in the unwholesome parts of meat.

P. 70, l. 15. **senseless of** : having no sense or perception of.

P. 74, l. 29. **tell** : count the drops of his blood as though they were coins.

P. 75, l. 30. **admiring** : marvelling.

- P. 76, l. 2. **drift** : aim, scheme.
 P. 77, l. 14. **boisterous servitor** : noisy attendant.
 19. **caudles** : warm drinks for sick people, consisting of gruel mixed with ale or wine, sweetened and spiced.
 P. 78, l. 7. **lucre of it** : acquisition of, or desire to acquire, it.
 21. **liked their business well** : hoped their expedition against the Athenians might be successful.
 P. 79, l. 8. **admiring** : a posture of astonishment.
 P. 80, l. 12. **conduct** : leadership.
 P. 82, l. 8. **conceit** : fantastical thought.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

- P. 83, l. 1. **Syracuse** : at one time an important Greek colony and the wealthiest city in Sicily.
 2. **Ephesus** : an ancient Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor ; an important trading centre.
 5. **marks** : an obsolete old English coin of the value of 13s. 4d. There was no coin of this name in ancient Ephesus, but Shakespeare was not careful of such points.
 23. **Epidamnum** : the modern Durazzo on the east side of the Adriatic.
 P. 84, l. 25. **for fashion** : in imitation of their mother.
 P. 85, l. 30. **Asia** : i.e. Asia Minor.
 P. 88, l. 9. **humours** : merry moods.
 P. 92, l. 22. **Dowsabel** : a poetical name for lady-love, here used sarcastically.
 P. 97, l. 25. **betrayed** : tricked me into confessing my own fault.
 P. 99, l. 8. **riddling** : like a riddle, difficult of solution.

OTHELLO.

- P. 101, l. 2. **to** : we should say 'after.'
 6. **affect** : like.
 13. **Bating** : setting aside.
 16. **conduct** : leadership, as in P. 80, l. 12.
 P. 102, l. 5. **demeaned** : behaved.
 18. **pliant hour** : a time when Desdemona was easy to persuade, compliant, yielding.
 22. **stroke** : injury.

P. 103, l. 13. **parts** : abilities.

P. 104, l. 29. **challenged** : claimed as her due.

P. 105, l. 8. **hang clogs on them** : keep them fettered.

14. **idle** : serving no useful purpose, unprofitable.

20. **war** : *i.e.* Othello's domestic troubles.

P. 109, l. 7. **he were best** : it would be best for him.

18. **be his solicitor** : would plead for him.

P. 111, l. 16. **dishonest** : an unworthy wife. Cp. *honest*, p. 113, l. 4.

20. **secure** : careless.

^s P. 112, l. 26. Sleeping draughts are prepared from the poppy (from which opium is made) and the poisonous plant, the mandrake.

P. 114, l. 20. **fancy** : liking.

27. **sibyl** : an inspired prophetess. When about to prophesy, the sibyls would work themselves up into a frenzy. This particular sibyl worked the handkerchief "in a fit of prophetic fury."

29. The dye used was a fluid composed of blood drawn from maidens' hearts. Look up in your dictionary the derivation of *mummy*.

P. 115, l. 15. **puddled** : sullied, as the waters of a dirty pool, become when disturbed.

19. **bespewed** : chided.

P. 116, l. 22. **fatal** : determined to slay.

P. 117, l. 28. **utmost censure** : the extreme judicial sentence.

EXERCISES AND SUBJECTS FOR COMPOSITION.

HAMLET

1. On what different occasions did the Ghost appear to Hamlet ? What was the purpose of each visit ?
2. Tell the story of how Hamlet finally became convinced of his uncle's guilt.
3. Write a short epitaph for Ophelia.
4. When he was dying, Hamlet "turned to his dear friend Horatio, and requested him that he would live to tell his story to the world." Write Horatio's story.
5. Try to write a scene by means of which Hamlet proves his uncle's guilt.
6. Why do you think Hamlet delayed to revenge his father's death ?

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

1. Write an account of Puck and his doings.
2. Relate in your own words the story of the quarrel between Oberon and Titania.
3. Draw a little diagram to explain the strange confusion of the lovers in the story.
4. Imagine that the clown, whom Titania was made to love, is telling the story of his adventures to his companions. Write his story as he might tell it.
5. Invent a fairy tale of your own, introducing the fairy people mentioned in this story.
6. Demetrius writes a little song of thanks to Oberon, the Fairy-King.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

1. Tell the story of how Polixenes found out that Florizel loved Perdita.
2. Write out any other story you may have heard or read concerning the Delphic oracle.
3. "Her little son Mamillius was just beginning to tell one of his best stories to amuse his mother, when the king entered, and taking the child away, sent Hermione to prison." Finish, either in prose or in verse, the story that Mamillius began. (These were its first words: "There was a man dwelt by a churchyard.")
4. Describe in your own words the scene at the sheep-shearing.
5. What is the meaning of the word Perdita? Explain why Shakespeare gave the princess this name.
6. Tell any other story in which an infant prince or princess is left to die, and is afterwards found and reared by a shepherd or peasant; or one in which a baby is found and reared by a princess.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

1. Explain carefully why Don John resolved to prevent the marriage of Claudio and Hero.
2. Tell the story of how Benedick came to believe that Beatrice loved him.
3. "Borachio made a full confession to the prince." Write Borachio's confession as though you were he.
4. "'She died, my lord, but while her slander lived.' The friar promised them an explanation of this seeming miracle." Write the friar's explanation.
5. Write a letter from Beatrice to Hero after their marriage.
6. Try to explain the title of the play.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

1. Compose a dialogue between Lord Lucius and Timon concerning the "four milk-white horses trapped in silver."
2. "Such summer birds are men." Show from the story what this means.
3. Write a letter in which Timon's servant, who loved the rich Athenian's daughter, thanks Timon for his present of three talents.
4. Write an account of the last feast which Lord Timon proclaimed.

EXERCISES AND SUBJECTS FOR COMPOSITION 125

5. Let the honest steward Flavius tell the story of Timon.
6. Give in your own words Timon's reasons for his hatred of the Athenians and of mankind in general.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

1. Explain fully the reason for the title of this play.
2. Tell the story of how Ægeon found his wife.
3. Compose a dialogue between Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus to take place after the mystery has been cleared up.
4. Ægeon relates his adventure to his two sons.
5. Write a letter from Adriana to Luciana, the subject-matter being the "comedy of errors."
6. Let the goldsmith relate his story of the mystery.

OTHELLO.

1. What part in the story does Desdemona's lost handkerchief play?
2. Tell in your own words the story of adventures which Othello was wont to tell his lady Desdemona.
3. Write a letter in which Cassio explains to Othello his lapse in discipline.
4. Write in your own words Othello's defence of his love for Desdemona before the Duke of Venice.
5. How do you think the story might have ended if Othello had not so hastily killed Desdemona?
6. Write a character sketch of Othello.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Write sentences to show the meanings of the following words :

(a) Exclusion, conjecture, antipathy, protestation, hypocrisy, injunction, expostulations, imputation, minion, artifice.

(b) Contemptible, consistent, dispirited, fictitious, partial, heinous, dexterous, fantastic, refractory, palpable.

(c) Counterfeit, importune, meditate, impute, dissemble, reconcile, conjecture, enjoin, aggravate, engross.

2. Write sentences to illustrate the difference in meaning or use between : compliment, complement ; credible, creditable ; principle, principal ; human, humane ; illusion, allusion ; older, elder.

3. Show that each of the following words may be at least two parts of speech : fleet, brave, patient, maiden, capital, round.

4. Find from your dictionary the derivations of : extravagant, obvious, epicurean, caitiff, epitaph, strict, secure.

5. Whom do you consider the greatest villain in these *Tales* ? Give some account of him.

6. Write a sketch of the female character in these *Tales* which appeals to you most.

7. Who are Camillo, Luciana, Cassio, Ursula ? Write two or three sentences about each of them.

8. What laws are specially mentioned in connection with (a) Athens, (b) Ephesus ?

9. Where are Epidamnium, Messina, Cyprus, and with what events in these *Tales* is each place connected ?

PASSAGES FROM THE PLAYS FOR LEARNING BY HEART.

(These are not printed in full because they are meant to be dictated and explained by the teacher.)

Hamlet.

Act I. sc. i. Dialogue : (Marcellus) " 'Tis gone . . . speak to him."

Act III. sc. i. Hamlet's speech : " To be, or not to be."

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

Act II. sc. i. Oberon : " I know a bank . . . cock crow."

Act II. sc. ii. Fairies' song : " You spotted snakes with double tongue."

Act V. sc. i. Theseus : " The lunatic, the lover . . . and a name."

The Winter's Tale.

Act II. sc. i. Dialogue : (Hermione and Mamillius) : " Come, sir, now . . . in mine ear."

Act IV. sc. iv. Perdita : " Here's flowers for you . . . in his strength."

Much Ado About Nothing.

Act I. sc. i. Dialogue : (Beatrice and Benedick) : " I wonder that you . . . parrot-teacher."

Act III. sc. iii. the first part, and Act IV. sc. ii., the Dogberry and Verges scenes.

Othello.

Act I. sc. iii. Othello : " Her father loved me . . . witness it."

Act V. sc. ii. Othello : " Soft you . . . smote him thus."

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